

STORM & SUNSHINE  
IN SOUTH AFRICA

ROSAMOND SOUTHEY









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MISS ROSAMOND SOUTHEY.

*Frontispiece.*

# STORM AND SUNSHINE IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY ROSAMOND SOUTHEY

EDITED BY

FRANCES SLAUGHTER

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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## PREFACE

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MISS SOUTHEY being a near relative of the late Sir Richard Southey, K.C.M.G., and of Sir John Frost, K.C.M.G., she had unusual opportunities during her stay in South Africa of meeting members of the Cape Government, and of learning much about the social and political life of the country. Both Sir Richard Southey and Sir John Frost held important posts in the Government of the Cape Colony and both took part in our earlier wars with the Boers and natives.

While in South Africa, Miss Southey made visits to relatives in different parts of the country, and as she is a keen observer she has much to tell that the ordinary visitor does not notice.

Miss Southey's elder sister, Mrs. Bruce Steer, was in the country during the late war, in order to be near her husband, Mr. Thomas Bruce Steer, who was an officer in Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry. Mr. Steer—the Tim of the narrative—showed conspicuous bravery in many of our engagements with the Boers, and after being mentioned in dispatches was given the D.S.O.

Before her marriage Mrs. Bruce Steer made an expedition alone by ox waggon through Zululand, and the account of her experiences is one full of interest.

From Mrs. Steer's diaries and letters the parts concerning the late war have been taken.

General Sir John Dartnell, K.C.B., C.M.G., Mr. Steer's

brother-in-law, contributes a most amusing account of a fishing expedition undertaken by himself and some friends, as well as a singular story of lion shooting. General Dartnell was for many years in South Africa, where he held the posts of Chief Commissioner of the Natal Police and Commandant of the Natal Volunteers.

From the pen of Colonel George Mansel, C.M.G., comes the history of the Nongai or Zululand Native Police, which force Colonel Mansel raised and of which he was the Commandant. Of the Natal Police and of the part they played in suppressing the native rebellion of 1906, Colonel Mansel also writes, and both accounts are to be found at the end of the volume. In the stirring times in which the forces were raised, with which Sir John Dartnell and Colonel Mansel were so closely connected, tragedy and comedy were strangely mingled in the dealings of our soldiers and officials with the native and the Boer population, and many anecdotes of these are scattered through the book.

After the death of Mr. Bruce Steer in the Orange River Colony, in September, 1904, Miss Southey and her sister did not return to South Africa, but their visits to the country, in some cases prolonged over several years, extended from the year 1893 to the beginning of 1904.

In all cases the greatest care has been taken not to include anything that might hurt the feelings of those who are mentioned in these pages, or the surviving relatives of those who have given their life for their country in that distant land. If, however, there should be anything to cause a moment's distress to any who are directly or indirectly concerned in the events that are recorded, the fault is to be attributed solely to me as the editor of the book, for South Africa has never come within the scope of my wanderings, and I have therefore had a difficult task

in putting the voluminous notes and diaries that were confided to me into book form. I may inadvertently have included some things that, had I been acquainted with their inner history, I should have suppressed, and if this has been done I can only offer my most sincere apologies to any whom it may concern.

FRANCES SLAUGHTER.

*September, 1910.*





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# STORM AND SUNSHINE IN SOUTH AFRICA

## CHAPTER I

### WYNBERG AND RONDEBOSCH

OF my many voyages to and from the Cape, I have nothing of special interest to relate. The strangest thing that lives in my memory took place when we were approaching Madeira on one homeward voyage. We were steaming at full speed when a square rigged sailing ship of, perhaps, 500 tons, was seen coming towards us. She came on like a beautiful white sea-bird, the purest white from stem to stern and her sails gleaming in the sunlight. Our ship gave her a formal salute as she drew near, but to our surprise no answer was received. Then our vessel screamed out a warning, and still the white ship took no notice, but flew on right under our bows. As I stood watching her slip by, I could have tossed the proverbial biscuit on to her deck, where not a single soul was to be seen. With every sail set she flew before the steady breeze, but no living creature was visible on board. One of our ship's officers who was standing near me was as mystified at her strange appearance as I was. We had an idea that her rig was Portuguese, but her spotless whiteness was more suggestive of an English yacht.



Anyhow, she passed away like the wraith of a ship, and we must have suspected her of being the Flying Dutchman's Ghost Ship, had we been in the proper latitude.

While the ordinary routine of life on board ship between England and the Cape goes on as almost everyone knows it in these days of travel, the sea journey between Cape Town and Durban, or "going round the coast" as it is usually called, is often a lively experience. There is always a big sea round the Cape of Storms, where the waters of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans meet in angry conflict. The ship's screws are whirling in the air half the time, and the pitching and rolling is so bad that I have often stayed in my berth to save my limbs being broken, though I longed to see the battle of the elements outside. At Port Elizabeth I have seen the coast strewn with wreckage, and on one occasion a big, three-masted ship was lying on the sands, while another was driven helplessly across our bows. Two tugs were chasing the latter vessel and we stood watching till the tugs won the race, catching the big sailing ship just in time to save her from going on shore. For hours our captain tried in vain to discharge his cargo. Several tugs brought out lighters, big wooden boats that when the hatches were down were closed in completely, but it was impossible to get anything into them. At last, after one man had been swept overboard and only saved by a miracle, the attempt was given up, and the tugs, each with two or three lighters in tow, went back to the harbour. Our mail boat then weighed anchor and departed, for the captain told me later nothing would have made him pass that night near Port Elizabeth, though it was only a "south-easter" blowing and not a gale.

Another time, when my sister was coming round in the *Scot*, it was very stormy, but a few of the passengers

insisted on going to land in a tug for a few hours, in spite of the captain's warning that they might not be able to return. The weather grew worse in the afternoon, as it often does on that coast, and when the tug came out it struggled vainly for an hour to get alongside the *Scot* without being smashed in the process. Her passengers were all the time soaked by the heavy seas that swept her decks. At last the ship's doctor sprang into the chains at the risk of his life, as the tug rolled up against the ship, and clambered on board. The tug then carried the other passengers back to shore. Maggie heard afterwards that she was a long time in the harbour before she could get alongside the wharf and land her drenched and sea-sick passengers, who, of course, missed the *Scot* altogether.

At Durban a basket is used for putting passengers into the tugs, and I must say that I prefer its safety, however ignominious, to jumping into a rolling boat from the gangway. When I landed last at Durban from a transport there was an amusing scene before we got off. Our captain and the landing officer could not agree whether the ladies and the senior officers or the juniors should be "basketed" down first. Would it be dignified for ladies and the O.C. to go *after* subs.? On the other hand, if they went first, they would have some time to wait while the numerous junior officers were sent after them, and while the huge transport was steady as a rock, the little tug was rolling horribly. The problem kept the authorities so long that, pending the decision, we went to luncheon, and it was quite late before the matter was settled and we heard that dignity must be considered before sea-sickness, and we prepared to lead the way. We were consequently swung down into the tug and there left to roll and pitch frantically till the others were on board. Personally my descent was most

uncomfortable, for I had a large Irish terrier in my arms, and as I am not tall Jerry was wedged closely against my neighbours and I had great difficulty in preventing his attempting to clear a space with his teeth. The attempt would have been none the pleasanter for his victims in that the eight occupants of the basket were jammed so close together that it was impossible to move. The jar as the basket falls on deck is always unpleasant, but I have never seen anything rougher than the way the unfortunate subalterns were bumped down. It seemed a wonder that no bones were broken. Once the basket struck the gunwale of the tug, and the men inside had a narrow escape from being thrown into the sea, where it was being tossed up wildly between the two boats. Also there are sharks off Durban. However, in the end we all got safely over the bar and up to the quay, but the delay had made it impossible for me to start on my up-country journey that day.

My sister and I had a very trying little adventure once when going round the coast. We had an unusually quiet passage for that stormy part, and there being few passengers on board we each had a cabin to ourself, and in consequence had done a great deal more unpacking than we should have done on the longer voyage to England. One night, between 1 and 2 a.m., when we were getting near Durban, I was awake in my berth, when a splash of water full in my face brought me out into the cabin speedily, but only to receive a second sousing through the open port-hole. The ship was rolling as if she must turn turtle, and how I managed at last to close the port I do not know. Then I staggered and fell into my sister's cabin and wrestled successfully with her open port-hole. Six times the big boat rolled, and the consequent confusion can be better imagined than described. Every bell

on the weather side of the ship rang distractedly and stewards and ship's officers flew to the rescue. Water was everywhere and our two cabins were as full as the foot-boards allowed. The violence of the rushes of water had torn our frocks from their pegs and swept them into the torrent below. I picked a lamentable rag from the lake in which I stood that only a few minutes previously had been a charming creation in the nature of a tea-gown. It was truly a pathetic sight! Yet I fear that I enjoyed the excitement, and my presence of mind no one can deny when I say that my first action as I sprang from my berth was to remove the curler with which my short front hair was adorned. Beyond this, there was no time to think of appearances, and in scanty attire I was busily fishing for my clothes, when from my sister came a warning cry: "Do look out. It is not a steward, but an officer who is helping." "I do not care a rap," I answered truthfully, while a suppressed laugh near me showed that Maggie was right. It must have been an hour before our belongings were rescued, and the ship being once more steady, we were established in cabins on the opposite side, and were wrapped in warm dry blankets and given hot compounds to drink by the good stewardess. What caused those great waves can only be guessed, probably a volcanic disturbance, but the officer on watch at the time told me afterwards that there was no warning before a huge wall of water came down broadside upon us.

On one of these coast voyages we had a most exciting start. Our ship was to take seven hundred Malay pilgrims as far as Mauritius on their way to Mecca. We fortunately went early to the docks, and, indeed, most of the friends who came to see us off, had gone before the bulk of the pilgrim crowd came on board. When they did come, hundreds—thousands, it may well have been—of



their fellow Malays crowded along the docks with them, sweeping before them the barriers and the dock officials who tried vainly to stem the torrent. The pilgrims were stowed safely away in their quarters, but the quay was covered with a mass of excited, frantic Malays, who kept rushing at the two gangways and struggling to get on board. The brilliant silk dresses of the women and the picturesque white garments of the men made the wharf a scene of glorious colour, but as the time for the start drew near the crush was awful. Some of our passengers who arrived late were only got on board with the greatest difficulty. On each gangway a stalwart ship's officer, backed by quartermasters chosen for their strength, blocked the way and fought furiously whenever a determined rush was made by the maddened crowd. Some women and children I saw lifted bodily over the heads of the crowd, and though frightened and bruised in the crush, they were got on board without serious injury. The mob meant no harm but was mad with religious excitement. One friend who had driven down with a pair of spirited horses to the quay remained with us till the ship started. In the meantime his horses were being held in a shed at the outer end of the quay and their owner would be obliged to drive right through the Malays on his way back. We were very uneasy about his safety, for his horses never started in a way soothing to weak nerves, and what they would do when they were asked to face the howling mob of excited human beings it was impossible to say. As the ship swung round slowly I saw the terrified horses being forced, without accident, through what appeared an impossible throng, and a prettier piece of skilful driving I have never seen.

The first view I had of Cape Town when our ship came into dock did not make a more lasting impression on my memory than did the appearance of the cab horses.



How well-bred and how weedy they looked, for they were virtually thoroughbreds run to seed. In other parts of the colony you find the same class of horse, but the deterioration caused by the South African climate is nowhere more strikingly shown than in the Cape Town cab horses.

Cape Town itself has been described too often for me to attempt it here. "Sun and dust" it was certainly when I first landed there in December, the middle of the summer season, but very pleasant recollections I have of the time I spent there. Of the Cape suburbs there is only one possible verdict—they are lovely. I have stayed at Wynberg, Rondebosch, and Newlands, and all are delightful. After the dry glare of Cape Town in summer, where as likely as not a south-easter has blown your hat and your temper into shreds, to get round Table Mountain into the shelter of the suburbs is one of the pleasantest experiences I know.

I have been told that the position of the camp at Wynberg is one of the most beautiful in the world. The view is certainly magnificent. From the front of the officers' mess-house—as it stood in 1894—well up on the hill where the camp lay, you looked far over the green Cape flats to the blue waters of Simon's Bay. On the other side, rising sheer out of the water, lay the steep range of the Hottentots Hollands, beyond them the yet more lofty Stellenbosch Mountains, and towering over all the immense heights of the Hex River Mountains. I have twice seen the tops of the last-named mountains white with snow, while the sea was of a summer blue and the Flats were smiling at my feet.

Table Mountain alone is enough to make anyone love the Cape. Never the same, it is always grand and impressive, and during brief breaks in the winter rains I have seen a hundred waterfalls pouring down its

precipitous sides. I confess that I have never climbed it. Why should one get hot and exhausted in clambering up to see what imagination can show you as clearly when you gaze comfortably at it from level ground. I never want to test my theories too far. I have, however, wandered for hours on the lower slopes of Table Mountain, though I had not the ambition to pry into its higher mysteries. On one occasion, indeed, I did covet the novel sensation of swinging from a crane over the precipitous side above Cape Town, and had this been possible, I should have climbed the mountain with enthusiasm. It was while my sister and I were staying at Rondebosch with our cousins, the Frosts, Sir John Frost being then the Minister for Agriculture in Cape Colony, that one evening at dinner the General's A.D.C. told me about some work that was going on at the top of the mountain. This work necessitated a large crane being fixed on the top of the steep side over the town, by which stone was hauled up in a cage from a shelf about half-way down. The A.D.C. had been over in the cage and gave such a glowing account of his experience that Maggie, my cousin Edith Frost, and I were fired with a determination to do likewise. We appealed to Sir John, in whose power it lay to give us permission to go, and he, wise man, said never a word against our mad project, but promised to speak to the engineer in charge and arrange for the expedition. The next day we were as keen as ever on our plan, and asked Sir John eagerly when we were to go, but—it was so unfortunate, there was a slight trouble with the machinery, and that trouble lasted till some fresh idea put that of being lowered over Table Mountain out of our heads. Our kind cousin had no idea, I am sure, of risking our necks in such a venture.

The General's party did indeed make a trip in the



ZULU WOMEN DRESSED FOR WEDDING.



basket and were swung out and rushed down safely, but a few days later there was a narrow escape of a dreadful accident. Some officials—Members of the House of Assembly, if I remember rightly—had started on the exciting journey, when just as the basket swung over the tip of the precipice, the crane jammed and it was a toss up whether the basket would capsize or not. To swing in the air some 3,000 to 4,000 feet above Cape Town, with a sheer drop beneath, must have been exciting enough for any one, and it was some time before the basket could be reached and its occupants hauled into safety.

Among my many happy recollections of the Cape suburbs are the drives to Muizenberg. We used to start early in the afternoon, have tea at "Farmer Peck's Hotel," and get back in time for dinner. What drives those were along the straight, level road, with the Flats at first stretching wide on each side, till as you approach the sea Table Mountain closes in on the right, and there is only room at its foot for the road and the little villages to which people flock from all parts of the colony to enjoy the lovely scenery and the pure air.

One spot on the Flats I loved above all, it lay at some distance from the road along which we so often drove. This was a pond covered with water Inchies, beautiful white lilies that during the flowering season sent their fragrance far over the Flats. Even now, absurd though it may sound, whenever I am ill I always smell those lilies. In imagination I invariably go back to my Uncle Richard's—Sir Richard Southey—cool, dimly-lighted rooms, I feel the warm, scented air come through the sun shutters and hear the innumerable doves in the pine woods round the dear old Dutch-built house where my uncle lived. Then the scent of the lilies comes to me and I even see the Malay women wading in the



shallow water and busily cutting the lilies. Of these they make a stew dear to the heart of the native, and a still more unromantic interest attaches to the beautiful arum lilies from the native's point of view, for they cut these in quantities and use them for feeding their pigs! The fancy with regard to my beloved pool is so firmly rooted in my mind, that when during an illness last spring, I only smelt my lilies faintly, I was afraid that the pond and its lovely freight had perhaps been done away with. I wrote out, therefore, to a friend to ask if anything had been changed, and was much relieved to hear from him that all was still as I had known it.

With this friend we once had a rather exciting drive to Muizenberg. At one point bush fires were raging on both sides of the road and the cloud of flame and smoke hid even the road from us. We did not feel inclined to turn back, so through we went, the terrified horses tearing along at full gallop. The driver was a fine whip who could take such little risks more safely than most, and happily, as we could see nothing ahead, there was not much chance of meeting an equally determined Jehu coming the other way.

There can hardly be anything more beautiful than those Cape Flats on a spring day. Nothing can surpass the glorious freshness, when the country bursts forth after the rains into a glory and wealth of flowers. Of all gorgeous tinted flowers that make the place so wonderful, none is more showy than the scarlet heath that during the greater part of the year is covered with innumerable flowers of brilliant colours. How well I remember one early morning ride over the Flats in spring in search of this heath. Our horses could not step without crushing the lovely many-coloured wind-flowers, as we called them, that grew over the turf like daisies in our home fields. Those lines of

Adam Lindsay Gordon's, "When each dew-laden air draught resembles, A long draught of wine," are always associated in my memory with that morning. The big stretch of country between Table Mountain and the sea, that was once I suppose only sand, is now covered with short, sweet grass and low bushes, interspersed here and there with clumps of trees. It is all a picture that cannot be done justice to in words.

That divine morning, alas, was fated to end in disaster so far as I was concerned, and all by my own fault. My companion and I had pulled up, and were looking far over the Flats in search of the erica, whose great blossoms show up at a distance even among the many-coloured wind-flowers. Wishing to see as far as possible, I stood up in the stirrup, and as my horse—I had never been on his back before—was enjoying the young grass, I left the reins dangling on my little finger while I was absorbed in my search. Without warning, down went the horse, jerking the reins from my heedless finger, and in a moment he was rolling ecstatically on the turf, first to one side, then to the other. When I saw the shining hoofs near my face I promptly turned a somersault into my hat, which had been banged off violently. I heard an agitated exclamation from my companion as I picked myself up, laughed, and put my hat on again. A more foolish thing I have never done, and the remark, "Well, I never thought you would have let go the reins!" made me feel smaller than any "candid opinion," however frankly given, could have done. The horse was soon caught by his master, and as the saddle luckily was not injured, we returned without further misadventure, though it was clearly the opinion of some of my friends that the accident served me right for riding on a Sunday morning and not returning in time for church.

This story against myself reminds me of one told me by my companion on that ride, which I enjoyed immensely. When quite a lad he was riding in a steeplechase in Ireland, and was thrown violently at the very feet of his mother. The first words his dazed brain took in were : " Well, Ned, I never should have thought that a son of mine would fall so clumsily." Very characteristic of a sporting Irish lady !

Before I went to the Cape I had the vaguest ideas about the climate, and was exceedingly surprised to find that the Cape peninsula has one all to itself, for the conditions are different to those that obtain in any place up-country. The summer,—at its height in December and January—is dry, and only very rarely varied by damp misty days. Gradually, as winter draws on, showers of rain increase to a continuous downpour that lasts for several weeks, and then decrease again into occasional showers, till the cloudless blue summer skies return. At the end of January, during our first visit to the Cape, I remember a curious experience in the way of weather. For three days a terrible wind blew, always from the same quarter, always with the same force, and I cannot describe the strange, breathless feeling this never-varying storm gave. We summoned resolution to go out for a walk once while it lasted, and the experience was weird. We turned into the beautiful avenue that stretches under Table Mountain, and I can never forget the look of those great trees lying down as though they crouched before the wind that blew on and on, never pausing, never giving one a moment in which to get breath, or for the trees to stand upright. We were just then spending a few days at the Vineyard Hotel, and our landlady was terribly upset by the storm. She had been through the hurricane that had devastated Mauritius some years previously, and to



account for her uneasiness she explained that just such a steady, undeviating wind had blown for three days before the hurricane. The poor woman was quite a pitiful object as she wandered about the hotel, listening with evident terror to the constant blowing of the wind. However, we had no hurricane, but the storm subsided as suddenly as it had begun and perfectly lovely weather succeeded. From what I heard, such an occurrence is unusual at the Cape.

I once thoroughly enjoyed a Field Day on those Cape Flats. It was a big day, held in honour of ex-President Reitz, of the Orange Free State, as it then was. At the time I was staying with the Frosts, and as Sir John had been Commandant of the colonial forces during the last Kafir War, the General then in command at the Cape asked him to be present. Sir John took my sister and myself, as well as his daughter, with him, and as invited guests we were allowed to go about as we liked during the manœuvres. Accordingly we elected at first to accompany the attacking force, with which also was the General and his staff. The General was of the old-fashioned, free-speaking sort, and it was a regular amusement with the Cape people to enjoy his language when excited. He was in his best vein on that Field Day. The O.C. of the defending force was one of his own staff, and a cousin, and the abuse hurled at his distant head during the progress of the operations was sultry. I had to turn away so that my amusement might not be seen, when the General turned his attention to the gunners and gave them his candid opinion of their work without any frills. The Artillery officers, worse luck for them, were not a mile or two away like the opposing commander. It was a very realistic day all round. When we were standing at the top of a small rise we saw a party of sappers below, determined to play their part

thoroughly, set to work to build a bridge over a supposed impassable stream, and to accommodate themselves to the (supposed) circumstances, they abandoned every shred of clothing. As there was no water except in their imagination, the result was certainly funny. This imaginary river also caused another *contretemps*. A too enthusiastic company of cyclists crossed the impassable gulf before the bridge was even begun, and tore unsupported after the retreating enemy. Vain were all efforts to call back the runaways, who were presumably annihilated, for they returned no more.

Having followed the attack for some time, we drove on and joined the retreating force, where we found their commander enjoying the situation as keenly as any one else. His object was to bring both forces by a certain time on to a good, level open stretch of turf, so as to finish up with a brilliant march past, and neither the General's wrath nor the remonstrances of his subordinate officers would make him attend to anything else. So we all retreated affably together, cheerfully disregarding indignant messages that certain positions could be easily held longer, and in excellent time arrived at the spot chosen by our commanding officer, with the triumphant attacking force close at our heels. The General was, I imagine, speechless with wrath by this time, at least I heard nothing, and no doubt the excellently arranged march past before the ex-President made up for all deficiencies in the earlier proceedings.

The march past, however, was not brought off without some preliminary difficulties. As we were out on the open Flats, there were no ropes to mark off the ground, and there being no regular officials to arrange matters, as fast as one bit of ground was cleared it was again covered with people. A big crowd had come out from Cape Town,

and at last Cape natives and Malays pressed in as well as whites. The General's A.D.C. was then sent to try his hand at smoothing matters, and he rode round politely requesting the long lines of spectators to fall back. Very little more notice, however, was taken of him than of the smaller officials. Then the D.A.A.G., in exasperation, took matters into his own hands, and cleared the course most effectually with the flat of his sword. Very soon our carriage was the only obstacle left, and we had been too much engaged in enjoying the scene to notice that we were left alone in our glory. My cousin suddenly became alive to our position and called out to the D.A.A.G., "Shall we move——?" "Well, sir, I should be glad if you would," came the weary answer, and we accordingly moved on.

The General's hasty manner and spicy speech were much dreaded by younger officers. One poor boy, just out from home, suffered badly from his superior officer's brusqueness. The lad was invited to dine at the General's, and in the course of dinner he asked a servant for some bread. As the man disappeared, the young gunner's next-door neighbour offered him a piece of bread that she did not want. When the man came back with the bread that was no longer wanted, an awful voice came from the end of the table: "Mr. —, may I beg that you will not send my servant for things that you have already." The poor boy collapsed, and the lady whose innocent offer of the bread had been the cause of the scene, was so convulsed with suppressed laughter that she could do nothing to set matters right.

One of our favourite expeditions when we were at Rondebosch was to the Government Farm at Constantia. It was a lovely drive from the Wynberg Station, and the farm was perfectly delightful. The house, once the

residence of the old Dutch Governors, had been built by slave labour well up on the slopes of Table Mountain, where the side is much less steep than it is nearer Cape Town. It is a typical Dutch dwelling-house, with great cool rooms, a wide stoep in front, and an indescribable air of shade and peace pervading it everywhere. Long ago the place was considered to be too far out to serve as the Governor's residence, and it has since been used as an experimental farm, where grapes and all kinds of fruit likely to be useful in the colony are grown, and young plants are sold at low rates to the farmers. Wine-making also goes on at Constantia, and tasting the various kinds of wine is a feature of a visit to the farm. It is wonderful how few wines can be tasted before all seem to be alike, and it is impossible to say whether you are drinking Hermitage or Pontac. The wines are excellent, and we were very much interested in the process of making them. A gruesome story, however, was told us of a Kafir having once fallen into one of the vats, and his whereabouts not having been discovered till all the wine had been drawn off. Let us hope that it was a tale merely kept for "rooi-neks" (new comers) and was not meant to be taken seriously.

There are many tales that are always produced for new comers, and as I moved about the colony I came to regard them quite as old friends and welcomed their appearance. I think the favourite one is of the Englishman who wrote home that it was a most extraordinary thing that all dogs in the colony were named "Footsak," and they ran away as soon as they were called. As "footsak" means "get out," and is one of the commonest expressions in the country, this was not so surprising as it seemed to the new comer. Another favourite is that of the official who, when he arrived at a little up-country town saw a man



waiting outside the "tronk" (gaol), who was showing signs of great irritation. On the official inquiring what was the matter, the man said that he was a prisoner and he and the gaoler had been out all day, and now he could not get in. It was too bad of the gaoler to be late, for he might have to spend the night on the veld. As the particular "tronk" was only a shed of sorts, the story is a possible one.

A story that was current not only in Cape Colony but also in Natal, was to show the astounding ignorance of home authorities about South African affairs. When the question of a chaplain for Maritzburg was first mooted, it was suggested gravely from England that the chaplain at King William's Town should officiate at one place in the morning and at the other in the afternoon. As even now, with the immensely improved methods of travelling, these towns are several days' journey apart, the point is obvious. There were many much more wonderful stories kept strictly for new arrivals, but happily for us we were not the victims of these, as we were not real "rooi-neks." Our relations at the Cape had been in the habit of visiting our home during their frequent runs to the old country from the time we were small children, and we had in consequence become acquainted with much concerning the life and ways in South Africa at second-hand. I fear, though, that with many "intelligent strangers," the native desire to impress and astonish was too strong for veracity.

I remember my Uncle Richard once finding me with a book written by some early Cape official in my hand. He smiled and said: "Ah, —'s book. I am afraid they did tell him some wonderful stories; but," indulgently, though with a shake of the head at such guile, "he was such a temptation to the young fellows. He took in everything they told him and noted it down gravely, and they could

not resist stuffing him up with wonders." Certainly the "facts" I read were very surprising, and the writer's views of colonial life most novel.

For myself I have found colonial ways much like home ways, and the colonials very much like Englishmen at home, though taken as a whole the former are perhaps more cautious and reserved in their manner to strangers. Their hospitality and kindness of heart are unquestionable, and if frequent squabbles have caused some friction between the old country and the colonies, loyalty firm and unbroken, among many with whom I have talked, remains as deeply rooted as ever. Unfortunately a swarm of non-English, or of English riff-raff flows steadily into the towns where there is hope of making money, and visitors to South Africa only judge of the people, outside the official and political circles, by what our Zulu boy, Teddy, used to call "White Trash," and they never meet the true colonial at all. The sturdy descendant of the early settlers whose pluck carried them through endless dangers and privations in the past, and who himself fought in his youth in the Kafir Wars, now fights on steadily and undauntedly against drought, cattle disease, locusts and the many other difficulties and troubles of the present day South African farmer's life. The colonial women, too, are equally brave and enduring. In the old days they shared the dangers of the wilderness, and now even among the richest up-country colonists their daily anxieties are incessant. Native servants who do not require constant supervision are few and far between, and in many parts can only be trusted to do the rougher part of the daily household work.

Even now, outnumbered as the white population is by the black, life is not very safe for white women, and in past years many of their lives were stirring indeed. One

incident, told me casually by a cousin, impressed me very much. She told me that during the last Kafir War she had remained with only her little daughter in her own homestead near the scene of war during the whole of the rising. Her husband and all the other able-bodied men of the district were fighting at the front, and her servants had gone to join their friends in arms against the English. Every day natives coming from farms farther away from the frontier streamed past the place to join in the fighting, each with a crane's feather stuck in his hair, the Kafir sign of war. Yet my cousin spoke of this merely as showing the extraordinary ways of Kafirs in not molesting her, and without the slightest consciousness of the wonderful nerve and unfailing courage she had shown in waiting quietly day after day, and week after week, helpless as she was if the passing natives had attacked her.

In Cape Town and some of the other larger towns the service difficulty is less acute than elsewhere. The Cape natives and trained Zulus, the Indian natives and the white people, both English and Dutch, who often become capital servants, naturally remain in the towns where they command very high wages, and such treasures are rarely found elsewhere. Many of the servants at the Cape are descendants of the old slaves, and they usually have a mixture of Dutch blood. Some of these are really excellent, and my Uncle Richard, for instance, had a housekeeper and coachman both of whom had been in his service for something like forty years. Better servants than they were could not be wished for. I always remember the amazement of the housekeeper at our love for the arum lilies that grew wild round my uncle's place. "Why, ma'am," she used to say, "we call them pig lilies. They are only good for feeding pigs." All the Cape servants, alas! are not distinguished for their



honesty, for some of them are dreadful thieves. While I was out there an unlucky officer of the garrison found one morning that every single pair of boots and shoes he possessed had been carried off during the night. His plight in consequence was so comical, that there were, I fear, more laughs than sympathy expended over it. There was an attempt at burglary at the Frosts' house while we were there, but the geese made such a noise when disturbed by the invaders, that the latter bolted without doing any damage except to the locks of the outside doors. Like the Capitol of Rome, we had been saved by geese, and every single visitor who came the next day to congratulate us on our escape referred to this remarkable fact. Not one forgot it; the historic reference was as unfailing as "How do you do!"

During the winter I spent with my cousins at Rondebosch I took a warm interest in the sittings of the Cape Parliament. Sir John Frost was then passing an important Agricultural Act, and Mr. Cecil Rhodes soon after brought forward and passed triumphantly, after an all-night sitting, his Glen-Grey Bill. I took much trouble to hear Mr. Rhodes speak, this being at the time a most important measure for the colony. I was not disappointed. I know little about oratory, but I do know that whenever Mr. Rhodes spoke it seemed impossible that any except the views he advocated could be tenable. Often when I knew that he was to answer the Opposition, I would watch him sitting almost in a heap and looking half-asleep, while the most taunting abuse was being hurled at him. From his appearance you could not tell whether he heard a single word or was dozing quietly. But when the time came he would confront his adversaries, and crush them calmly, steadily, uncompromisingly. No longer sleepy or indifferent, the innate power of the man

showed in every line of his face and figure. I never watched him throwing off his opponents without thinking of a roused lion, too secure in his strength to lose for a moment his calm dignity.

As our relations were intimate friends of Mr. Rhodes, I saw much of him in private life, and I cannot express the charm his personality had for those who so knew him. As an instance of his quickness in making use of any scrap of information that came in his way, one night at dinner my sister's ox-waggon trip through Zululand was mentioned. Mr. Rhodes at once questioned me about it, and after listening with the greatest attention to all I could tell him, he remarked triumphantly to the table generally: "An excellent proof of the quiet state of Zululand." Native questions just then were a very important factor in local politics.

The beautiful gardens at Mr. Rhodes' house at Groote Schuur I knew well, for my cousins were allowed to make what use they liked of them. Never have I seen violets grown in such profusion as they did at Groote Schuur. They were a constant delight to us and we would pick quantities of them on our many visits to the gardens, and scarcely see any difference in the beds after our depredations. The head gardener told us that the plants were moved frequently and put into fresh ground, and they were grown with trenches between each row. The fine old Dutch house was only just rebuilt, and we loved to wander through the rooms where the impress of the owner's tastes met one on every side. Although the large hall was an ideal place in which to display horns and other trophies of the chase, Mr. Rhodes would not have any. He said that as he had not any of his own shooting he did not want them. I was much interested in a model elephant—silver, if I remember rightly—that

had been picked up near Lobengula's kraal during the first Rhodesian War and given to Mr. Rhodes. It stood in his favourite room and was much valued by him. Mr. Rhodes took a great interest in the life of Napoleon, and it was from his library that I read one of the rarest and most interesting of the many memoirs of the great Emperor. A friend who has lately returned from South Africa tells me that after Mr. Rhodes' death, she went out to Groote Schuur, and that both she and her companion had such a curious sense of the dead owner's presence during their visit that they could only speak in low tones. Yet it was not at Groote Schuur, but at his cottage at Muizenberg that Mr. Rhodes died.

At the time when I was there the enclosure for wild animals was being made along the slopes of Table Mountain behind Groote Schuur, and I saw the first waterbuck that was sent down from Rhodesia for it. The buck, a fine-looking specimen, was established in the stables, and he did not live, I fancy, to run free in the big stretch of mountain land fenced in for him and the other wild animals. This same enclosure caused some confusion among people who had heard that lions were among the wild things to find a home at Groote Schuur. I heard one lady, who was calling at the house where I was staying, declare that she should not care to live so near Mr. Rhodes' enclosure, as from what she could see of the fencing the lions could jump it easily. In vain she was assured that the lions would not wander at their own sweet will among the buck on the mountain side. She was sure there would be danger, and as she took leave she still tried to impress us with the fact that it really was not safe. Since then the lions' enclosure has been made, and the lions are there.

Mr. J. X. Merriman, who afterwards was Premier of

Cape Colony, was, when I was there, one of the leaders of the Opposition. I never happened to meet him, as he lived a short distance out of Cape Town, and usually returned to his farm when the House rose. I often heard him speak, and was always on the alert when John X. Merriman, as he was universally called, stood up to make one of his brilliant sarcastic speeches. As he leaned slightly forward and fixed his keen dark eyes on his opponents, he always reminded me of a sketch by Du Maurier. His tall figure, clean-cut features and distinct utterance, would have drawn attention to him apart from the biting cleverness of his words. There was an element of uncertainty, too, as to who would feel the lash of his tongue, for it seemed to me that he enjoyed flicking up a tripper on his own side almost as much as making a telling attack on the Government. As long as Mr. Merriman spoke there was never a dull moment in the House, but I cannot say the same of all the members. As many of the speeches, too, were in Cape Dutch, which to me was an unknown tongue and sounded exceedingly harsh and ugly, it is small wonder that I occasionally grew sleepy and was very thankful when tea time arrived and some friendly member carried us off to the pleasant spacious hall for rest and refreshment. Of course I knew many more of the Ministers and members of both Houses, and my friends included men of all shades of politics, though with the Bond and Negrophilist members, whose acquaintance I made in a few instances, I was hardly likely to be in sympathy.

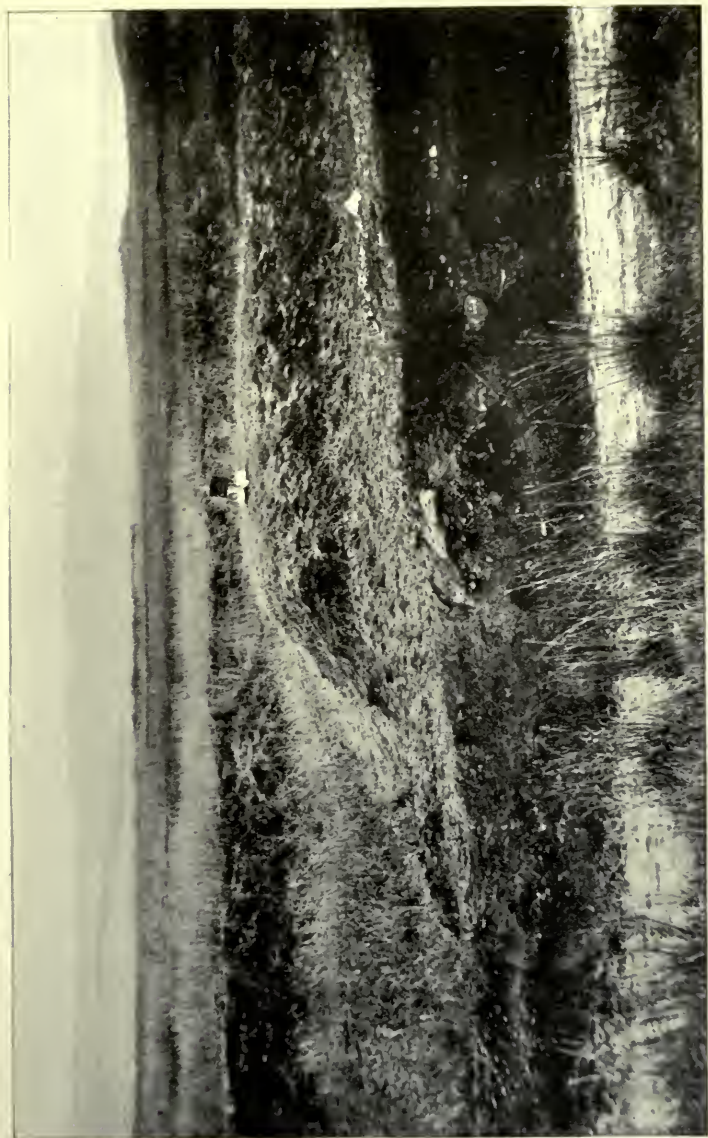


## CHAPTER II

### PAST AND PRESENT

NEARLY all the houses in the Cape suburbs were built on the Dutch pattern, and well the early Dutch settlers knew how to plan their dwellings. Slave labour was made use of, and the houses were excellently built. I do not know whether Southfield, my Uncle Richard's house, was as old as the days of slave labour, but it was single storied, as were all the early Dutch houses, and it stood far back from the dusty road, with a long stretch of grass in front and pine woods folding it in at the back. These pine woods extended for a long way and were very beautiful, but they were a source of anxiety to my uncle owing to the danger of fire. They were very popular for picnics, and friends used often to beg for the use of them, requests that were never refused in spite of the chance of stray sparks setting light to the dry woods. The scent of the pines on hot summer days was delicious, and we loved to wander in them, the only drawback being the heavy sandy paths that made walking very tiring. On one side of the house was a large paddock that, in the days before the Newlands cricket ground was made, was in much request for cricket matches.

When we first went out there was a most interesting horse standing in my uncle's stables. "Prince" was the horse that carried the Prince Imperial on the day of his death. He had been given to Uncle Richard many years before, and since then had passed a quiet life much beloved by all the members of the household. It was



THE PLACE WHERE THE PRINCE IMPERIAL WAS KILLED.





truly strange that he should have been restive on that ill-fated day when his master was killed, for a more good-tempered animal it is not possible to imagine. He was, of course, very old when I knew him, but he showed what a grand horse he had been. I drove him once in a pair, but he was only taken out rarely and for a short time. During our stay at Southfield, Prince had to be destroyed, to the great grief of his owners, but his teeth had quite gone and it was found impossible to feed him properly. We all went to say "Good-bye" to the grand old fellow, and great was the gloom over the household on the day he was shot. I still have in my possession a little piece of Prince's mane that I asked the coachman to cut off for me.

Another horse, or rather mare, that had belonged to the Prince Imperial, had been given to my uncle, but she died long before we went out. Yet another inmate of the Southfield stables was a Basuto pony that had been brought down at the end of the Basuto War by my cousin Colonel Southey.

The pony was a beautiful little creature, bay in colour, as most of the Basutos I have known were; and though he was too old for general work, I rode him several times and he carried me gaily.

In the house were many interesting trophies, among them quite a collection of native weapons, and some old bushmen's arrows we were never allowed to touch, as even after many years their poisoned tips were not considered safe. An elephant's tusk, I remember, always went by the name of Lobengula's tooth, I suppose because it was a present from that chief.

We were never tired of listening to Uncle Richard's tales of the old colonial days in which he had taken part. He could just remember seeing slaves sold in the open

market in Cape Town, and told us that when a mere lad he had felt so sorry for one slave girl that he nearly bought her as a present for his mother. His house had been twice burned over his head by Kafirs, and he had taken part in most of the early Kafir Wars. Uncle Richard and that fine old English soldier, Sir Harry Smith, were sworn friends and comrades, and the former had been Sir Harry's right hand in many of the early native risings. He had command of the regiment of Guides in one of the wars, and he was consulted by his chief so incessantly at all hours of the day and night, that he could get no rest. It was with a hearty laugh that he told us how one night during the campaign, determined to get a good night's sleep, he climbed secretly up into the loft of an outbuilding at the farm where the head-quarter staff was established. In vain A.D.C.'s hunted, and orderlies rushed distractedly in search of the missing Colonel of the Guides. He knew that there was no real need for his advice, so chuckled as he heard the search going on and enjoyed his night's rest thoroughly. I forget whether he ever told Sir Harry of the trick he had played on him, but I expect that he did, and they enjoyed the joke together.

We had an instance of the affection Uncle Richard inspired in those who were thrown with him while we were at Vryheid. When I joined my sister there I found that an old Boer was in the habit of coming constantly to the house. On each visit he brought with him a little bunch of flowers that he presented either to my sister or myself. The old man had known my uncle when he was Governor of Kimberley, and was never tired of talking of him and his kindness. The latter, so far as I could make out, consisted chiefly in having given the Boer breakfast one morning when he had gone early to see my uncle on

business. At any rate, that meal was never forgotten, and we were always hearing about it. The old man had a photograph of Uncle Richard given to him, and he lamented bitterly that this had been destroyed when his farm was burned during the war. Uncle Richard had died before then, but at my sister's suggestion I wrote to our cousins at the Cape, and telling them the circumstances, asked if they would send a photograph to take the place of the one destroyed. Colonel Southey accordingly sent one, and it was really nice to see the old man's joy when it was given to him. We heard afterwards that the delighted recipient had spent the rest of the day running round in a rickshaw to his sons' houses, to show his treasure to them and their families. When my sister told him that we were leaving the country, the old man responded with a courtesy more characteristic of the Zulu than the Boer: "Then the sun of my life is set."

I must say that though personally I have never received anything but politeness from young Boers, my liking is for the older men, who, forgetting the quarrels of later years, only remember the days when they and the English stood side by side against the early dangers of fierce natives, wild beasts and hunger and thirst in the wilderness. Many a kindness have I known done, and many a kind word have I heard spoken by old English settlers to their Dutch neighbours, in spite of much that was trying in their relations with the latter, for the sake of old days when they fought side by side, white against black. The Dutch ideas of courage are certainly most curious. They will fight well when they think it worth while, but the British love of fighting for its own sake is to them incomprehensible. From one of our relatives I heard an amusing instance of their lack of zeal in the field. It happened in one of the late Kafir Wars in which my

informant was Commandant of the colonial forces. He was considered one of the best leaders of mixed troops we had, and there are few more difficult tasks than to manage a body composed of such discordant elements as English, Dutch, and friendly natives. The O.C. of a Dutch commando came to the Commandant and said that his men were tired of the campaign and wished to be sent to the rear. Upon remonstrance, he defended himself by saying that he was quite ready to go on fighting, but his men had had enough and he could not force them. In contemptuous disgust for an O.C. whose men were out of control, and for the men who only wanted to get away from danger, the order was given for the Dutch to retire to the rear, and they were stationed at a so-called fort that was considered to be quite out of the fighting area. The joy of the poor-hearted force at such prompt relief was, however, short lived. No sooner had they taken up their position than the tide of war swept round to them, and their safe retreat suddenly became the very centre of the strife.

I fancy it was in that same native war that swords were given to the colonial officers. An ex-officer once told me a story against himself with regard to the new possession. He was so proud of his new weapon that when during one of the skirmishes in the bush, a Kafir armed with a stabbing assegai came for him, he never thought of using his revolver, but rode at his adversary with his sword. "Of course," he told me, "if I had only thought of my revolver I could have disposed of him at once, but my sword held possession of my mind. So there we were, each trying to get round the other's guard, when to my disgust the 'retire' sounded, and I had to gallop off leaving the Kafir in possession of the field."

It is a strange anomaly that the Cape Dutch, whose



severe treatment of the natives has caused much of the friction between them and the Imperial Government, should have so much black blood in their veins. The strange fact is, however, true, and I think is partly responsible for the sallow, muddy complexions of the up-country Boer women in Cape Colony. Want of exercise, and the stifling closeness of their living rooms, are other causes that conduce to it, and it is only in Cape Town and its suburbs that you find the bright, fresh complexions that make the women so attractive. While writing these reminiscences of the time spent in South Africa, I have been much struck with the accounts of the Dutch settlers given by Sir Robert Wilson, who was in command of the cavalry when for the second time we took possession of the Cape in 1806. Very little have the ways and appearance of the Boers changed during the hundred odd years of our rule over them. Their comfortable houses and their ill-ventilated rooms are the same now that they were in the early days of the last century. The heavy two o'clock meal that Sir Robert says used to consist of "Soup, fish, curry, meat, vegetables, and a dessert with Cape wine and claret," is still in vogue even during the hot weather, and very trying it is to any English who may be their guests.

"Dancing is an accomplishment of which the Cape young people are passionately fond, and in which they eminently excel," says Sir Robert—and of all colonists, both English and Dutch, this is still true, not only in the towns, but up-country. Of course the young people on the lonely farms have no other possible form of evening amusement, and they think nothing of gathering at some central farmhouse, and after a ride of many miles at the close of their day's work, dancing away till morning. They have indeed no option about keeping up the festivities



till dawn, for no accommodation for sleeping is provided, or, indeed, in most of the farmhouses would it be possible for a large gathering, and as soon as daylight breaks the guests ride home to take up their daily duties as usual. Young colonials never seem to be too hard worked to get up a dance, and the break in the monotony of their lives must be good for them.

Of the terrors of the South-easter at the Cape I have spoken already, but I have never met with a more vivid description of one than that given by Sir R. Wilson. "When the cloud embryo of the South-east wind is seen forming upon the Table Mountain, then every door and window must be closed. The heated air within is more tolerable than the malignant and wild blast that is about to rage. The fleecy speck soon shapes itself to maturity; vapours roll on vapours, and gathering from all quarters shoot their supplies to feed the engendering war of elements. The masses piled to the heavens and belging over the eminence of the tableland seem bursting, indignant at restraint. At length the signal volley is fired, and the dense cloud precipitates itself half-way down the mountain, when it disperses to fill the opening space and affords relief to the earth that seems about to be crushed by its weight. In a few minutes, however, the storm resumes its action, and at the first onset every fabric is shaken to the foundation. Gust succeeds gust until the successive shocks become too frequent for contemplation; whilst the light fragments of the loose soil are impelled with such fury that the atmosphere becomes solid; and yet so subtle are the fine parts of the sand that no joiner's art can resist its penetration, and so sharp are the coarser particles that no living surface, if exposed, can be insensible to acute pain. Such is the violence, with such virulence does this wind urge its course, that the most

philosophical temper can scarcely refrain from a frenzied clamour against its imaginary animosity, or from offering, like Lear, in despair of sufferance, 'mad defiance of the tempest.'" Poor Sir Robert, how he must have suffered before he could rise to such heights of eloquence. The truth of his description of the descent of the vapour usually called "the spreading of the tablecloth," will be recognised by all who have watched the gathering of one of these dreaded storms.

In the time of this old writer there was no good road leading from Cape Town to the suburbs, the sand of the Flats had not been bound down by creeping plants, and the poor Commandant of cavalry used to get hopelessly lost when he tried to take refuge for the night on the other side of Table Mountain. No wonder he wailed plaintively about difficulties of driving round the mountain, for at the most exposed point I have sometimes wondered that the train was not blown bodily off the line. The Cape wine, I notice, must have greatly improved in character under the British Government, for it is certainly not of the pernicious character, "suddenly intoxicating," and causing various sorts of illness and at last death, that I find attributed to it in those old days. I used often to wish, though, that there were no Cape wines or spirits, or that they were kept from natives, as they are, at least openly, in Natal. When driving through the beautiful pine woods of the suburbs our horses would often shy across the road, the cause of their fright being a drunken native lying by the roadside. In Natal I have never seen such a thing, for there the laws against giving natives intoxicating drinks are stringent. Of course natives often take too much of their own "gwala"—beer—as they have done from time immemorial, but as they drink this in their kraals and it is not unwholesome unless

taken in immense quantities, they are little the worse for it.

I notice that Sir Robert Wilson does not mention Van-der-Hum, the Cape brandy liqueur, so I suppose that this is a modern product. The Cape people think a great deal of it, and always make strangers taste it. Very nasty, heavy stuff, I thought it, and after one small taste never meant to touch it again, but fate was too strong for me. When I was staying with some cousins at Johannesburg, I helped myself one day at dinner to a particularly nice-looking salad. Others at the table had done the same, when suddenly a chorus of exclamations of disgust broke from all the party. Anything nastier I have never tasted. The mistress of the house made inquiries as to the dressing that had been used, and the cook indignantly produced a bottle labelled "vinegar" that proved to have been filled with Van-der-Hum by mistake.

The wonderful driving of the Cape natives that one sees to-day seems to have been as noticeable in earlier times as it is now, for Sir Robert exclaims dramatically: "English charioteers! hide your diminished heads, for your skill does not equal that of a Hottentot." Certainly the dexterity of the Hottentot drivers with their long lashed whips is nothing short of marvellous, and they drive their teams of mules with the most consummate skill.

The Cape Town Theatre was a great attraction both to the dwellers in the town itself and in the suburbs. Some excellent companies came out from home while I was there, and very pleasant little evening expeditions into the town we had to enjoy them. To drive in was a doubtful pleasure if there was anything in the shape of a southeaster blowing, and we generally went in by train, the theatre being almost close to the station. Sometimes, it is true, we arrived rather blown about, and I have had

great difficulty in following the performance because of the noise made as the wind drove incessant showers of pebbles and gravel upon the roof. As officers as well as men always wear uniform in public places in the evening, this makes the gathering far more picturesque than at home. The theatre was, too, quite a gay social meeting place, and between the acts friends and acquaintances got quite as much amusement out of each other as from the play.

One very popular company delighted Cape Town while I was there, and on the last night of their stay rather an amusing compliment was paid them. The first two or three rows of stalls were entirely filled by men who each wore a band of crape on his left arm, the youth of Cape Town having arranged the display as a sign of their grief at the departure of Miss Jessie Moore and her companions. The solemn lines looked sufficiently funny surrounded as they were by the ladies' light gowns and the gay mess uniforms of the garrison. It was either at Cape Town or Johannesburg, that while witnessing "Faust," I discovered to my great joy that the flowers in Marguerite's garden were planted in paraffin tins. Anything more characteristic of South Africa could not be desired, the useful paraffin tin filling up so many gaps in one's life there. They come in handy even when driving—if your steeds are donkeys. I remember that, when we first went out, the latest feminine fancy was donkey tandem driving, and a paraffin tin fastened to the back of the trap was a necessary part of the equipment. The bang and rattle of the tin was considered most efficacious in hastening the pace.

Another incident at the theatre was certainly unusual. A well-known operatic star from England was the *prima donna* in "Il Trovatore," and, as most of the other singers were local productions, a hitch occurred before the performance as the lady insisted upon singing in Italian and



the local contingent could only manage English. At last a compromise was arrived at, the star sang in Italian and I think one man followed suit to support her, while the rest stuck to their native tongue, the consequent mixture of tongues being more suggestive of farce than of the passionate notes of "Ah che la morte." Miss Jessie Moore's Company had an immense success at Johannesburg as well as at Cape Town, the lively Johannesburgers—those were pre-raid days—thoroughly enjoying "Mademoiselle Nitouche" and the other bright pieces. In those days, too, "God save the Queen" was always played after a performance at the theatre, in spite of President Kruger, who wisely left the Rand alone as much as possible in such matters, and ill would a man have fared if he had ventured to show disrespect to the British National Anthem.

It was at the Johannesburg Theatre that I saw one evening a man who had been a fellow passenger on the *Norham Castle*. This man had made no secret of his hatred of exile and of the thought of his future surroundings, and his almost fastidious manners and well-bred face had caused many comments upon his possible history during the voyage out. I was really sorry to see the fifth-rate, noisy set with him in the theatre, and when I spoke of him to one of my companions, I received the careless answer: "Oh, yes, Mr. ——. I don't think any one knows him; you see the kind of people he is with." And this only two years after he had landed in the country. Evidently he was one of those for whom the life in South Africa has marked the last stage in a downward path. In contrast to him was another man who had also been on the *Norham Castle*, and in his new life was clearly the right man in the right place. He had been nicknamed "Handsome Mr. Smith," to distinguish him from "Dirty Mr. Smith," a gentleman suspected by his indignant



cabin companion of a rooted dislike to baths. The former was a second-class passenger and was going out to try for anything that might turn up, his main idea being to enlist in the Mounted Police. An old school chum of his among the first-class passengers introduced him to many of us, and so charming were his manners and so delightful his Irish blarney that he acted in our theatricals and joined in nearly all our other recreations. Before we reached Cape Town he had so gained the goodwill of a wealthy up-country Cape farmer on board, that he was carried off triumphantly by his new friend to help manage the latter's farm.

I shall always remember the circumstances of my introduction to Mr.—now Sir Charles—Rudd and his family, that took place on the day after I landed in the country. It was Sir Charles who, with Mr. A. Maguire and Mr. F. R. Thomson, obtained the concession from Lobengula, that in the end gave Rhodesia to England. Sir Charles told me that on his way back he was lost on the veld and was without food for three days. He was rescued by natives and succeeded in bringing back the concession safely. It was after a long drive through the suburbs that we wound up by an invasion of the Rudds at teatime. When we went in Sir Charles had a copy of *Truth* in his hand, and later on he took up the paper again and read out to us with the greatest gusto, Labouchere's sweeping denunciation of the Chartered Company men—"desperadoes of the worst kind," etc., etc. Anything more quaint than the contrast between Sir Charles's particularly refined face and voice and the denunciation of himself and his fellow scoundrels, it would be impossible to conceive, and no one enjoyed the flow of unmeasured language more than the reader.

Among other interesting men I met at the Cape was

Major Elliot, now Sir Henry Elliot, C.B., K.C.M.G., then the chief magistrate of Pondoland, who was down to consult with the Ministry about his district. The Pondos were just then fighting continually among themselves, and the influence of their chief magistrate, for whom they had a great respect, was strained to the utmost to keep them in check. Major Elliot invited us to his magistracy for breakfast, with a battle thrown in, a sufficiently attractive prospect. "I cannot promise the battle absolutely," he told us, with a twinkle in his keen eyes, "but it shall be arranged if possible." Alas! I never visited Pondoland, so enjoyed neither the breakfast nor the battle.

There was another expedition that I should have loved dearly, but it never came off. When I was in the colony there were still wild elephants in the Government forests, and permission to shoot one could be given by the Agricultural Department. Of course the permission was given very carefully, but if obtained it meant a most interesting shoot. The Knysna Forests are, I was told, most beautiful, and the Government Lodge built in the middle of them a very interesting place, all the rooms being lined with wood of different kinds grown in the forest. It was not long after that a forest fire destroyed an immense number of trees, and I believe burned the house also.

Robben Island is one of the places in the vicinity of Cape Town that I am glad not to have visited. As not only the lepers of the colony are congregated there, but there are also plenty of rabbits on the island, my Uncle Richard used to go there frequently to shoot. He was attended on these expeditions by an old man, a harmless leper, who made an excellent gun-boy. My uncle often said that he would take us to see the island, but to

our secret relief this was never brought off. A most unpleasant affair happened during my stay at the Cape. The lepers who, in earlier times, had not been separated from their people on the mainland, had become restless, and two officials went out to inquire into their complaints and try and calm them. On the arrival of the boat the lepers seized it, overpowering the boatman by their numbers, and it was several hours before the officials, who were virtually prisoners in the hands of the lepers, could get away.

Life in the suburbs was very bright and pleasant and in many ways very much like that at home. Shopping expeditions to Cape Town often occupied the mornings, and in Adderley Street we usually met many friends similarly employed. In the afternoon came tea parties at Camps or at the Parliament House, where during the session we often attended the afternoon debates. Cricket at Newlands was a great feature of the social life, and there were many Gymkhana and Hurlingham Meetings at Kenilworth. Colonel—then Captain—Fritz Ponsonby was very great at these meetings, and I remember once seeing him and another man riding a race bareback and with neither spurs nor whips. They were flying along and urging on their ponies with their caps when someone shouted "You are making a mistake. It is the last in that wins!" Instantly they began to urge on each other's ponies, when another shout arose: "No, the first wins!" and back went their caps on to the sides of their own ponies. Such laughter and confusion as there was over that race, and I do not remember if first or last won after all. There was very good football in the winter, but the polo ground had not yet been made. I do not know much about the hunting either, as very soon after our arrival a draft of hounds from Ireland brought rabies into

the kennels, and the pack kept by the garrison at Wynberg had to be destroyed. Hydrophobia has been brought into South Africa several times, but it seems to have no hold there and has always been stamped out quickly. Distemper, on the other hand, is very bad at the Cape, and many dogs are lost by it every year. A very well-bred pointer that had been bred at Lobengula's kraal and had been presented by the chief to one of our acquaintances, was much mourned.

One strange experience I had at the Cape has a pathos all its own. The Cape Ministers had received a communication from a Dutchman living in the suburbs, of whom no one had ever heard, stating that the writer possessed a valuable collection of paintings, his own work, that he offered to the Government on the condition that a suitable building should be provided for them. The Ministers were much puzzled over this magnificent offer and at last deputed one of their number to go and report on the works of art. The Minister chosen declared that pictures were not in his line, for he knew nothing about them, but no one else was keen to take up the business, so he consented to do his best and asked me to go and help him. I really knew little more than he did, as my acquaintance with art was not such as to entitle me to act as art critic. However, no one better qualified being available, we set off one day in search of our artist.

Deep in the heart of a beautiful suburb we found the house. It was a delightful specimen of the old Cape Dutch dwelling, with its shady stoeps covered with lovely creepers, and cool large rooms opening one into another; all dark and silent till our host let in the light, and the sound of our footsteps echoed through them. Our host—I shall never forget the old man—I can see him now and hear his voice, as in perfect English he told us how from



boyhood he had lived only for and in his work. For seventy years he had given himself up to his art, shut away from the world in that silent house, from whose windows we looked down the shady walks and plumbago hedges of its beautiful garden that formed a fitting environment of such a home. There was something child-like and indescribably pathetic in the old man's face, as he told us that it had been his dream to give his life's work to his country, as soon as it was completed. Now the long-looked-for time had come, and his fate was in our hands. So he took us from room to room, and dismay deeper and darker with every picture we looked at, took possession of us. They were impossible. Yet we could as soon have struck a confiding child as hurt that old man with his wistful, trusting face.

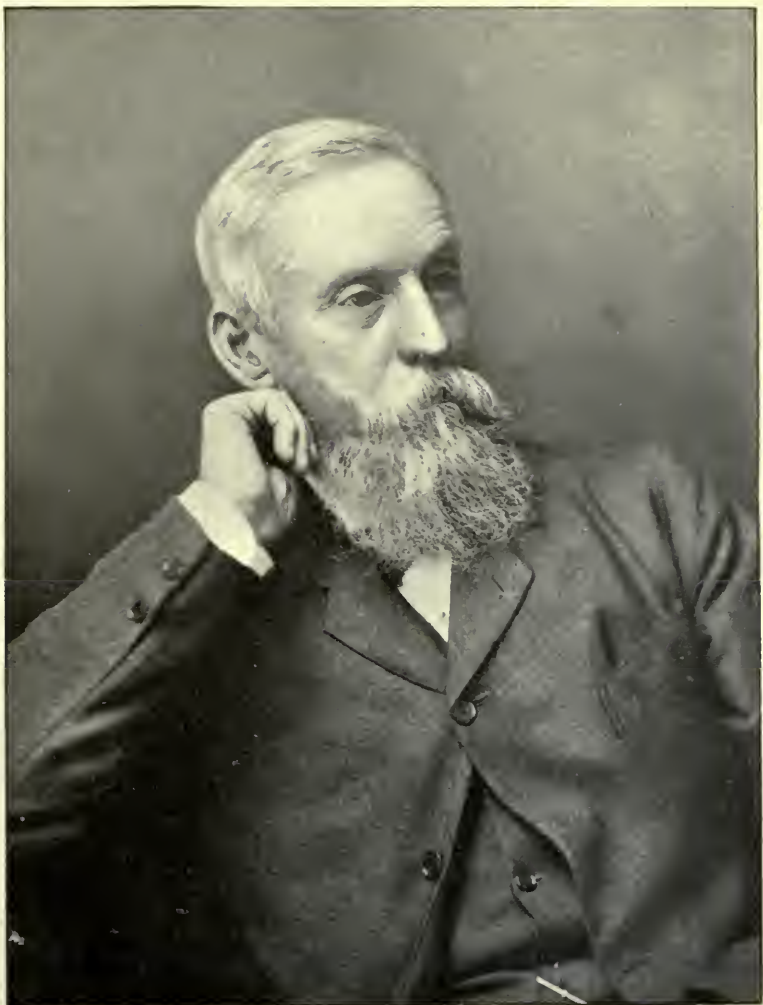
When I saw my companion looking nearly as bewildered as he felt, I pulled myself together and tried to rise to the occasion. I discussed the pictures as seriously as if art criticism was my special vocation in life, and not only said everything good I could think of with any shred of truth, for the strange products of his brush, but I fear a good deal more. I was not honest, I own, but how could I tell the brutal truth? If the old man had believed me, it would have killed him. I remember descanting warmly on the beauty of a shade of blue used largely in the skies, but did not add that though the colour appealed to me as a possible one for a frock, I had never seen a shade like that in the heavens. My companion meanly left me to do the talking, and contented himself with standing conscientiously in front of each picture in turn, and gazing hard at it.

At last, with a sigh of relief, he stopped dead before a battle scene, evidently feeling that here was something he could venture to give an opinion on. The picture represented a hard yellow hill dotted over with the most wooden-looking soldiers I have ever seen out of a toyshop. Some



lay perfectly straight out on the ground ; others stood up stiff and equally straight in outline, and all looked much too large for the mountain—just as toy soldiers usually do for their toy forts. In the foreground were two mounted figures, obligingly disregarding the battle in their rear, so that their faces might be seen by the spectator. The old Dutchman, whose head about came up to the Englishman's shoulder, looked up at the latter with a quiet far-away glance of pleasure at the interest he showed: "Ah!" he said "that is Majuba, with Paul Kruger and General Joubert in the foreground." I listened for the comment with interest. "But," deprecatingly, "I thought Kruger and Joubert were not present at Majuba." The Dutchman's face was a study as he listened, kindly pity prevented him from showing contempt too plainly, as he answered politely, "Ach so! were they not indeed?" as though such a trivial detail as accuracy had no possible importance in art. After that I was left to take up my tale of nice things, unaided by the soldier critic, whose views the artist regarded unmistakably as beneath contempt.

We seemed to walk through miles of picture-filled rooms, and I thought they would never come to an end. At last, wearied out, we parted with our host and emerged into the sunlight and the ordinary outer world. I felt as though I had been in a dream; that old man and his weird pictures seemed so far removed from the every-day conditions of life. The thought of the inevitable downfall of his cherished ambition weighed, too, heavily upon me. I never heard of him again, but the Government politely declined the proffered gift, on account of want of funds to provide an adequate building.



SIR JOHN FROST, K.C.M.G.

*To face p. 40.*



## CHAPTER III

### HUNTING THE PORCUPINE

A LITTLE over two months after our arrival at Cape Town, my sister and I went up country to stay with our cousin Charles Southey and his wife, whose home was in the Little Karroo. This healthy district lies east of Middleburg and Cradock, and it was by his doctor's advice that our cousin had settled there. It was in February that we went up, when summer was merging into autumn, and I confess that I was much relieved at the assurance given us before we started, that the worst time for thunderstorms would probably be over before we reached our destination. I am a terrible coward about storms, and I had been delighted to find that they are few about Cape Town; indeed, I have never seen one there as bad as an ordinary thunderstorm in England. I was not at all anxious to make their acquaintance up-country, for I had been told awe-inspiring tales of their terrors, that as I found later were not at all exaggerated.

We left Cape Town by the R.M.S. *Athenian*, as we decided to go by sea to Port Elizabeth, where an old friend of ours had settled, instead of going by rail, the simplest and most direct route. This voyage was my first experience of rounding the Cape of Storms, and in spite of warnings I took up a position forward on the hurricane deck, for it seemed impossible that while the sun shone serenely and all looked so bright and fair, the waves could dash over it. I soon retired, however, wet through, quite

satisfied with the might of the "mile long rollers" that came sweeping up from the Antarctic Circle in all their unbroken strength to hurl themselves against the towering heights of the rock-bound cape. Fortunately, both my sister and myself are good sailors, so we rather enjoyed the tossing we experienced, and had our usual tea parties on board in spite of difficulties caused by our vessel's lively behaviour.

Port Elizabeth is not to my mind an attractive place, and the country round is so terribly dry-looking and barren, that I have often thought a south-easter must have been blowing at the time the early settlers landed there, or they would never have had the courage to trust themselves to such an inhospitable looking place. Port Elizabeth itself as seen from the water has such a hard, white appearance in the clear air that it has quite a dazzling effect, and coming from Cape Town one misses the grand cliffs and the glorious mountains. Yet there are pretty bits of country to be found near the town, and about twelve miles out lies Kragga-Kamma, the country place of a well-known South African family, the Christians. This is a beautiful place, and we spent one or two days out there with the Christians, whose hospitality is unbounded.

Scorpions we were prepared for at Port Elizabeth, though as a matter of fact we did not see one during our stay, but cockroaches we had not bargained for, and these we had in shoals. My sister and I had to share a room on the night of our arrival, and soon after we had retired Maggie saw what she thought was a mouse running over the floor. When she exclaimed, I looked down with mild interest that quickly changed to horror, as I saw that the intruder was not a mouse, but a cockroach, the first of a following host. On they came, more and more, monsters four or five inches long and with horrible crackling of



their wings, crept fast upon us from all sides. They climbed the walls and swarmed up the bed where we had taken refuge hurriedly, after ringing the bell violently for assistance. Servants flew in to see what was the matter, and soon the landlord was fetched to rescue his terrified guests. He proved a valiant knight, and armed with a huge iron ladle and a bucket he attacked the enemy undauntedly. The hotel servants, who were all ex-ship stewards, and very handy, also worked hard, and a quantity of Keating's powder was scattered broadcast over the room. Meantime the distressed damsels watched the battle, huddled up in terror on the bed. At last the room was cleared, but we were expecting a fresh inroad all night, and the next day insisted upon being moved to the other end of the large building. We heard later that these brutes were of local celebrity, and that cockroach hunting was a favourite after dinner sport with the men who assembled at the hotel for dinner.

In spite of the cockroaches, the hotel was a capital one, and in the garden there were most fascinating aviaries, shaded by beautiful trees and creepers, and filled with rare birds of the country. These were a constant source of delight to us, and shared our admiration with the great tree ferns that, planted in wooden tubs, stood at intervals along the verandas. Many a cosy little nook was to be found between the ferns, and in one of them we could establish ourselves with our belongings and have a delightful little drawing-room where we were undisturbed by the other guests. During our stay at Port Elizabeth we met some charming Americans who knew Uncle Richard, and as one of the party was the manager of De Beers at that time, they very kindly invited us to go round by Kimberley and see the diamond mines. This unfortunately we were not able to do.

One thing we did admire in the town. This was the picturesque effect of the bright-hued costumes of the Indian natives who thronged the streets, which made such brilliant splashes of colour against the white buildings. These Mohammedans were so numerous that they had a mosque of their own, and every night the "muezzin" sounded as if in an eastern city. We were glad to leave the heat and dust of the town behind us and set off on our railway journey up-country. We started at night, as usual seen off by new friends and old shipmates in the friendly South African fashion, and by noon next day we reached Tafleberg, the nearest station on that line to the Southey's' home. The little station, with a tiny church and a few farmhouses, constitutes the town of Tafleberg, and as we stretched our cramped limbs after the night journey we had our first breath of the clear fresh air of that open country.

My cousin's son Claud was waiting for us, and he soon had us and our baggage stowed into the Cape cart, and we set off on our twelve miles drive to the house. Our four horses flew through a river by a shallow drift and away along the rough veld road towards the distant horizon. I shall never forget the exhilaration of that first glorious drive over the great uplands of the Little Karroo. The vast veld was broken up by endless ranges of blue flat-topped mountains, that rose abruptly from the plains, line after line stretching far as eye could see in the clear atmosphere. Sixty miles away towards the south rose the immense ranges about Cradock, and to the north a lofty line of hills that we were told marked a step up in the world, for there was no corresponding descent on the other side. These hills merged in front of us into the now sadly historic Stormberg, while far behind us up the railway line lay the broken

hills round Middleburg, one of which, called Thebus Mountain by the Dutch, is shaped like a fantastic sugar-loaf, and is a curious contrast to the many flat-topped mountains round it. And over all that vast expanse of country there was hardly a trace of man's disfiguring works. Only now and then as the road wound over a rand or rocky rise we could see the station and the railway line gleaming in the sun behind us, or as we went on we caught sight of the low white house standing almost on the road ahead, for which we were making. This was the half-way house on our two hours' journey, for in the Cape Colony journeys by road are usually measured by hours, six miles being reckoned as an hour's ride or drive.

Presently the half-way house, where our Uncle Harry lived, was reached. Before we could jump down, an old man, with one of the kindest faces in the world, hastened out, and taking us each in turn in his arms, lifted us down, asking as he did so which was Maggie and which was Rose. We had never seen Uncle Harry before, but we fell in love with him on the spot, and the more we knew of him the more attracted to him we became; so that his death a few years later was a great grief to us both. Like his elder brother, Richard Southey, Uncle Harry had been through wild times in the early days of the settlers, and had done his share of fighting to win the country for his native land. His young relations used to say of him, "Uncle Harry used to shoot bushmen in the early days as they do rabbits in England." When this was said before him he would answer: "Well, my dear, so they were like rabbits;" and in spite of his gentle smile and peculiarly sweet voice I have no doubt the old man did so regard them. Very dangerous rabbits, though, those bushmen must have been, with their poisoned arrows and

treacherous ways; and one, a servant who had always been most kindly treated in my Uncle Richard's house, once tried to kill the family by putting poison in their tea.

To return to our arrival at The Putts (pronounced Pitts), we were soon presented to our aunt, who was a semi-invalid and confined entirely to the house. Yet she was bright and interested in all our doings, and we had some difficulty in getting away from our hospitable relations when the time came for us to set off once more on our journey. There were other difficulties, too, about our departure, for unfortunately our horses did not share our desire to get in before the afternoon storm that we were told might still be expected. The wheelers absolutely refused to move. They had not been in harness for some time and had made up their minds to "stick," as this aggravating habit is expressively termed at the Cape. When at last they were persuaded to start it was at full gallop and in the opposite direction to their home—a piece of sheer perversity. When the pace was too great for any possibility of their pulling up, Claud wheeled his team round on the open veld and headed them in the right direction, and there was no more trouble. They still went on at a tearing gallop, and we enjoyed the little excitement of flying through the strong, fresh air at such a pace, feeling that this was the South Africa of our dreams, free and wild at last.

Claud remarked apologetically that the horses' tantrums were his fault, not theirs, for he had had no time for driving them lately, and they were out of hand for want of work. Those same horses once, when being driven to Schoombie Station, elected to "stick" with the cart hall hanging over a drift. They had pulled up the stiff ascent, but then stood immoveable with part of the cart's weight still on the traces. Luckily the drift was not far from my



cousin's house, and his trainer, who had noticed that the horses seemed tiresome at starting, had watched our progress from the house, with a view to possibilities. So help, in the shape of Mr. Brown and as many natives as he could get together at a moment's notice, was soon forthcoming, and the cart was got on by the natives standing on the bank and in the river bed and forcing the wheels round by the spokes. Once fairly started all went well for the rest of the drive, as on my first acquaintance with them.

My first impressions of my cousin's home were marred by a bad attack of neuralgia, and this, combined with a thunderstorm that broke soon after we got in, drove me to my favourite refuge—bed. The next morning I was very keen to inspect my new surroundings, and hurried out to see the house from the outside. Like all up-country houses in South Africa it was of one storey and white; but I should not say that it was exactly a typical building for all that, for the house itself was raised so high from the ground that offices had been built underneath, and quite imposing flights of steps led up to the veranda. From the veranda, consequently, there were lovely views over the garden in front of the house to the river, with its prettily wooded banks, away to the far-stretching veld and distant mountains. I have quite the true southern love of living on a veranda, and many pleasant, lazy hours I have spent on that one when the sun was too hot for active exercise.

For a short time after our arrival the weather was still hot, and there were thunderstorms on most afternoons. It has always been a puzzle to me why the farmhouses are not more frequently struck by lightning, for the storms are many and violent, and often, especially in the high parts where trees are few and never lofty, there is nothing but the houses to attract it. In the towns at least two



lightning conductors are put on every house, but on farm buildings there are none at all. Mrs. Charlie told me that once in a spirit of enterprise they had a conductor fixed on their house, but during the next storm she was so alarmed when she saw the dancing flames that crowned the split-up top of the conductor, that fearing it had not been put up properly she had it taken down promptly. The almost universal corrugated iron roofs are supposed to be some protection, as they split up the electric fluid and conduct it to the outside walls, but from there it has a free choice as to its route to the ground. The storms soon grew fewer after I reached our cousin's place, and after an uncomfortable interval of three days pouring rain and severe cold, the winter set in. Then we had absolutely perfect weather, cloudless sunshine all day, with cold, sometimes frosty, nights. Such wonderful nights they were on the Little Karroo, lighted up by a glorious moon, or by stars whose brilliance I have never seen equalled elsewhere. The Southern Cross, of course, shone clear and magnificent in the heavens, but this is never, to my mind, as beautiful as my favourite constellation, Orion's Belt. The latter I love because I can see it at home as well as in South Africa, and its face is always that of an old friend. One must, I fancy, be "native born" to give due appreciation to the Southern Cross.

As soon as the weather was settled we used to ride out over the veld in the afternoons, only turning homeward when the sun was sinking and the short African twilight fading. We cantered onwards by the light of the moon or stars, arriving, I fear, long after the dressing gong had sounded, so that our dinner preparations had to be a hasty scramble. I ought not to speak of the gong, for it was a "triangle" that really gave the summons. A native struck a dangling steel triangle with a rod, bringing metal

sharply against metal, and the pretty silvery sound that resulted rang far out over the veld, the last mile or two of our ride being hastened by its notes. Those were glorious rides with all the vast world of great mountains and undulating plains to ourselves, with the possible excitement of a newly-made ant-bear hole bringing one of us to grief. Although we might have passed over the same narrow native path an hour or two earlier, without there being a sign of a hole, an industrious ant-bear might easily have dug a pitfall that would trap the leading horse and send both steed and rider flying. We never did come to grief, owing partly, no doubt, to the cleverness of our horses in avoiding such holes, and partly to the care of my cousin's trainer, who usually had charge of the riding party.

One of my older cousins once had a terrible fall through his horse being thrown by stepping into an ant-bear's hole when galloping over the veld. His arm was broken in the fall, and there being no doctor available to set it for some time, the arm remained permanently shortened. It is odd that the ant-bears themselves are seldom seen, though their works are visible everywhere. My sister once caught sight of one when walking between the town and camp at Vryheid. She had no idea what the queer, pig-like beast that was slipping along near her could be, but her husband, who was with her, had seen one before and soon enlightened her. It was like a small, narrow pig with a long snout, and it glided along so swiftly and quietly that it vanished into a hole before the dogs could get anywhere near it, though the Irish setter and Irish terrier flew after it like greyhounds.

My first visit to the Karroo lasted three months, and it was a most happy time, for the free, open air life with its many interests suited me to perfection. My sister, after

a stay of a few weeks, went on to visit other relatives at Johannesburg, but I stayed on till I went back to Cape Town, *viâ* Port Elizabeth and the sea.

There was one form of sport I was very anxious to see while I was at cousin Charlie's, and that was porcupine hunting. This I could not be indulged with on my cousin's place, as Claud was a great porcupine hunter, and had cleared the lands effectually. However, a hunt was got up for me on a neighbouring farm, and I looked forward to it with the greatest excitement. One sunny afternoon Claud and I, accompanied by a terrier or two, rode over to the farm that was to be the base of our operations. The hunt was not to begin till 9 p.m., when the moon would be in a favourable position, but we spent the interval in supporting ourselves for our coming exertions with a good meal, and inspecting our pack of dogs that had been gathered with some difficulty from neighbouring farms. I must say that they were not a very level-looking lot, but it is unkind to be critical when all were loans and the best that could be procured. The two that we considered our mainstay were a sort of "bull and terrier," and these were the only ones that Claud believed would face a porcupine. The rest were terriers of various sizes and shapes, who were wanted to find the porcupine and help the bull-terriers generally, even if they would not actually tackle their quarry.

About six of us started shortly before nine o'clock, armed with sticks and carrying a couple of lanterns, while our bobbery pack was kept well to heel. Our plan was to creep silently along a belt of broken wooded ground and to come out in a pumpkin field just before the moon rose. Here we hoped to surprise a porcupine enjoying his evening meal, and to get our dogs on him before he had too good a start of us. As it was pitch dark under the trees

we were pretty safe, as we thought, till we came out into the open field. All went well, and we were moving gently along with our lanterns covered, till when we were about half-way through the rough tree grown stretch of land the most appalling noise burst out suddenly close at our feet. Yelps, howls, spitting, swearing, worrying noises that defy description rent the air. Then shouts from the men were added to the din as a lantern was turned on the scene of the commotion. Dimly its rays flashed on a struggling, fighting mass, that gradually resolved itself into a wild cat caught by her hind leg in a trap and our dogs on the top of her. I have heard that there is no fiercer animal in all nature than a wild cat at bay, and from the way that cat fought I can well believe it. The small terriers she drove back easily, but the "bull and terriers" fought like demons and she like a creature possessed. The three animals closed in a compact, struggling mass, while the small dogs danced round, barking and snapping wildly. All the time the men were trying to end the scene by killing the cat with sticks, a most difficult business with the dogs on or under her, and only two lanterns to light up the fray. Though the Cape wild cat is not large, it is very thickset and wonderfully strong, and the poor brute held her own against human and canine foes longer than one would think possible.

At last the worry was over, and our pack, not much the worse for its mauling, again under control, so we returned to our legitimate hunting, but naturally when we reached the pumpkin field not a porcupine was to be found. We had made noise enough to waken the Seven Sleepers, much less scare away every porcupine within a mile of the place. The chances for that night were over, and unfortunately Claud, having an engagement for the next day, we could not stay on and make another attempt, so that



my only porcupine hunt ended in failure. The next morning I carried off with me a consolatory gift of quills that had been taken from the last porcupine killed on the farm, but they were no real solace to my feelings. Porcupine hunting is most exciting, and not only requires cleverness and courage on the part of the dogs, but the hunters must be quick and up to their work in preventing their dogs being seriously wounded. The proper place for the dog to seize the porcupine is by the lip, as the quills of the latter point backwards, and the dog is thus safe from them. It is a useful form of sport, as the porcupines must be kept down or they will ruin the pumpkin crop.

There were a great number of ostriches at my cousin's, and the birds were mostly considered quiet except during the mating season, when all cock ostriches are nasty tempered. There was one that was always dangerous, for a worse-tempered, more cantankerous brute it would be impossible to imagine. He was called Barber, because he had been reared by that excellent sportsman, Mr. Hilton Barber, who was an old friend of Charlie's. Barber had to be kept in a separate enclosure or camp, where he apparently spent his time in considering what mischief he could perpetrate. There was always the chance of an unwary stranger passing through his domain, and while on the watch for such a piece of luck he stalked up and down with a tremendous swagger and giving defiant flaps of his great wings. Indeed, he was a very imposing looking and handsome bird, with his snowy white wings and jet black body. I have seen him employ a whole afternoon in trying to get through his quince hedge to attack a native gardener, working inoffensively on the other side. It was quite ludicrous to watch so much ill-directed energy. He kicked and scratched and pecked at the dividing hedge,



but, fortunately for the native in vain, for his character being well known, his fences were built accordingly.

When the time came for feather cutting, Barber had to be driven in with the other ostriches, and as Claud knew there would be trouble, he went to look up the bird himself. Used as Claud was to handling angry ostriches, it was all he could do to prevent himself from being kicked for some time, for Barber went for him furiously. Valuable as the bird was, Claud said afterwards that he had done his best to kill him in sheer self-defence, but all he succeeded at last in doing was to twist the bird's neck and body round till he was half-dazed. As ostriches kick downwards and as powerfully as a horse, the only way to beat one in a pitched battle—unless you break a leg with a stick, which of course means the loss of a bird—is to twist the creature round by the neck, avoiding kicks the while by keeping close to him, spin him round till he is dazed and then bolt for safety before the ostrich can pull himself together. Naturally this is a feat only a powerful athletic man can accomplish, owing to the bird's great strength. A cousin of mine was once attacked and only rescued just in time by her husband. Before he could drive the ostrich off she was knocked down and kicked, but happily the thick clothes she was wearing broke the force of the blow, and she was not seriously injured though sadly bruised and frightened.

To return to Barber. In spite of his determined rebellion, he was in the end driven up with the others into the birds' kraal for the feather cutting, and a most disreputable object he looked among the crowd of penned-in birds who were waiting their turn to be operated on. The signs of battle were plainly marked on his neck, that had evidently suffered badly. His feathers were woefully draggled, but his large round eyes were as wicked as ever,

and only the fact of his being pressed too tightly against his companions for the free use of his legs, saved them from being kicked.

As soon as the birds were penned together, Claud, or sometimes a native, would twitch a kind of hood over the head of one of them from the end of a stick, and then pull a draw-string that went round the hood, and tightening about the bird's neck, blindfolded it. Directly the hood was on, four or five natives rushed in, and, warily avoiding kicks, hustled the ostrich out of the kraal into a narrow pen with a sliding door at each end. The doors being shut and the walls too high for escape, the bird had to stand quietly while the cutters, leaning over from each side, swiftly clipped off the beautiful plumes. The ostrich was then freed by the door in front of him being opened and the hood removed, and it was let out into the open camp. If the ostrich was quiet and the hood remained safely in position till the clipping was over, the release was easy, as the men who drove it forward could get out of its way before its eyes were used to the light or its legs stretched after their cramped position.

But some of the ostriches, and the indomitable Barber among them, fought so vigorously during the clipping that their hoods slipped off too soon, and their release was in consequence a lively affair. The men who slipped back the pen door had to fly behind any convenient shelter, for the birds, directly they were free, turned and charged in all directions at their flying foes. On this occasion Barber did his best to avenge his injuries in the previous battle, and it was with difficulty that he was at length driven back to his own camp, charging all the way. The only hope of turning him was to present a big thorny bough of mimosa at his neck, holding it well out or he would

kick under it. Luckily all ostriches hate to have their necks pricked, and will not face mimosa thorns, so his native herds were able to force him along in the desired direction, and were obviously much relieved when their troublesome charge was at last shut up alone in his glory. I am afraid I rather enjoyed the running battle, watching it as I did from a discreet distance. Several times on the way, in spite of their spiky protection, the natives had to fly over walls or behind hedges, leaving Barber in possession of the field, until the men recovered breath and courage to tackle him again. Barber, it must be owned, was a hopelessly bad character, his record of sins including breaking a white man's arm and killing a native, not a bad bag for one bird.

The lesser vagaries of Barber and others of his kind, however, not only afforded us a good deal of amusement, but occasionally gave us some active exercise in getting out of the birds' way. One hot day, Mrs. Charlie and I strolled gently out to join Charles and his trainer, whom we were to meet in a certain paddock. We passed through the near enclosures blissfully unconscious of any peril, but as we drew near to the place of meeting, we were startled by a loud hiss, and there, charging full tilt at us, with neck and wings outstretched, was a ferocious ostrich. Only the previous day someone had passed through this bird's camp and found it perfectly quiet, but now its legs were red—alway a signal of danger—and it evidently meant mischief. Luckily a mimosa bush stood out in the open near us, and behind its friendly shelter we rushed with more haste than dignity. Our enemy would not face the spikes, but it waltzed round and round that bush after us, every now and again turning and charging the reverse way. The whole affair was so ludicrous that it has always been a marvel to me I was not caught, for

every now and again I was convulsed with laughter. The bird, however, would not get through the bush, and we were as nimble as he in running round it; and when Charles and Mr. Brown caught sight of our predicament from the paddock where they were waiting for us, the latter flew promptly to our rescue. My cousin collapsed altogether with laughter at the absurd spectacle, and could only stand and enjoy the scene, knowing that Mr. Brown was capable of dealing with the enemy. With a long whip he was carrying at the time, the trainer drove off the bird, and we were not sorry when relief came, as it is exhausting work to play hide and seek round a bush in the full sunlight on a hot day.

A very amusing experience with an ostrich befell General Sir John Dartnell and two other officers. They were out on a fishing expedition, but fishing was not the most exciting experience of their day. A friend had offered them the shelter of a small farmhouse that was close to the banks of the river where they were to fish, and about twelve miles distant from the town where they were stationed. This farm was worked by a white man and a few Kafirs, and the accommodation was of the roughest description. It was an old Dutch house built on the primitive plan of one large centre room, with small sleeping rooms opening out of it on either side, and a detached kitchen at the back. The floors were earthen and the walls whitewashed, and the front and back doors opened direct from the centre room.

After the ride out, the friends sat up late talking of the sport they expected on the morrow, for all three were ardent sportsmen. The caretaker at the farm was ready with advice on the many points that exercised the minds of the prospective anglers, but stipulated that he was not to be disturbed at the early hour at which the soldiers



would be abroad. Rods and fishing tackle were overhauled, and then dreams of the possible "Benders"—big fish that bend the rod with which they are being played—came to them in the hours of the night.

Betimes the fishermen were astir, and, after a cup of early coffee, were ready for the start.

It was a glorious morning, and at the end of the neglected garden, overgrown with straggling clumps of roses and shrubs, the mists were rising from the river and floating in fleecy clouds round the mountains that rose sheer from the far banks. Everything promised well for the day's sport, and jauntily with rod in hand one of the soldiers stepped down into the garden, calling to his friends behind to follow. Before, however, any one could do so, the eager sportsman tumbled back headlong into the room and flung the door to violently behind him.

"What the mischief is the matter?" he was asked in astonishment.

"Matter, indeed!" came the breathless answer. "There's a big cock ostrich out there, and he came straight at me and meant mischief."

The speech was greeted with shouts of laughter.

"Bosh!" was the unsympathising reply. "The ostrich will not eat you," and the second man strode out into the open. There, indeed, was a big ostrich parading up and down a little way from the house. Conscious that his friends were watching developments from the rear, the soldier bore down upon the bird, making violent demonstrations with hat and rod to frighten him out of the path. The ostrich, however, charged promptly, and showed fight in the usual way with his heels, and the second warrior rushed for safety, with as little thought of appearances as the first had shown.



In the meantime the third friend had gone back to his bedroom, and had thus lost the latter incident. He consequently advanced boldly to the closed door, and, asking his friends if they were going to hang about there all day, went down the steps into the garden. A stool, as well as fishing tackle was in his hands, and the former was soon sent flying at the ostrich to clear him out of the way. The bird charged down with the same promptitude as before, flapping his short wings as he ran, and, dropping his tackle, the man turned for the house. The ostrich, however, was too close upon him, and he had only time to make for the nearest bush, under which he disappeared. The enemy proceeded to strut round and round the bush, giving savage kicks at it from time to time, and keeping his prisoner close. Happily the kicks did not reach the captive, or he would have fared badly.

The watching friends were first convulsed with merriment, and then advanced in order to the rescue. Gathering up stones and clods of earth, they pelted the bird in earnest, and while the latter retired a short distance to consider the meaning of this fresh development, his prisoner took advantage of the diversion to break cover and make for the house, which he reached, with the ostrich following closely at his heels. The rescuers were already in safety, and a council of war was called.

From the window the bird could be seen solemnly parading up and down, and it was decided to attempt an escape by way of the back door. This ruse, however, the ostrich frustrated by appearing round the house at the first movement in that direction, and the discomfited warriors fell back.

What was to be done! Here were three stalwart

Englishmen and their attendant Kafirs prisoners at the will of one playful or savage bird. It was decided to appeal to the caretaker, whose amusement was great on hearing of the morning's adventure. The bird was quiet enough, he declared, and must have got loose from a neighbouring ostrich farm. He would soon settle matters, and in the meantime he advised the soldiers to fortify themselves with breakfast.

Scantily clothed in night attire, the caretaker sallied forth. The Englishmen, looking after him, saw to their surprise the ostrich turn and trot quietly away down the orchard, with the man following him. It was clear they must have alarmed the bird in some way, and they fell to their breakfast while they awaited the return of the caretaker. When they were ready for the delayed start, however, the man had not reappeared.

"Perhaps he is having trouble with the ostrich," suggested one man, and the three sallied out cautiously to take a look round.

On the far side of the orchard they saw the ostrich parading quietly round an apple-tree, and they soon discovered the lightly-clad figure of his prisoner in the branches overhead. Though much tempted to make tracks for the river while the bird's attention was bestowed elsewhere, the friends felt bound to attempt a rescue. Gathering sods and stones as they advanced, they let fly at the ostrich, and this they did with such good will that their enemy retired in confusion. The caretaker dropped to the ground, and no sooner had he done so than the ostrich rallied to the fray, and chased the four men back to the house.

Matters were now as bad as ever and another council of war was called. It was soon decided that a Kafir should be sent by the back entrance with a note to the owner of

the ostrich farm, while the rest of the garrison made a sortie in the front of the house. This plan succeeded, and then there was nothing for it but to wait, with what patience they could muster, for the owner of the wretched bird to appear.

In about an hour the Dutch farmer turned up, with half-a-dozen Kafirs, each armed with a long-forked stick. These sticks are used to keep the ostrich at a distance by catching his neck in the fork, and thus preventing him from coming close enough to use his heels with effect. As soon as the men had the bird in hand and were driving him back to the enclosure from which he had escaped during the night, the friends at last made their way safely to the river. But the best hours of the day were gone, and the influence of the malign bird was not yet at an end. One of the anglers took up his position on the bank of a nice little pool, where a big patch of reeds was behind him. As he waited for a rise, his thoughts turned to the strange occurrence of the morning. What a predicament it would be if the ostrich once more made an appearance among the scattered sportsmen. With a creepy feeling of impending danger he turned his head, just as a strong rustling stirred the reeds behind him. Some animal was evidently making its way to the spot where he was seated. The ostrich was upon him !

Springing from his seat, the discomfited sportsman rushed into the pool, and only when the water was up to his neck did he turn to survey his enemy. He then met the astonished gaze of two Kafir maidens, who stepped out from the reeds to fill their water-pots. A smile of amusement succeeded their first look of surprise at the strange appearance of a white man, fully clothed, taking an impromptu bath. The feelings of the soldier at being discovered in such an undignified position may be imagined.

Nevertheless, the good story against himself was told to his companions later in the day, and the subsequent chaff was taken in good part.

When the war broke out, Charles had two hundred and fifty ostriches on his land, but by the end of the struggle, owing to the cutting of the wire fences and other causes, there were only seventy left. He has now about the same number as he had before the war, though the last two years have been bad for rearing. The birds that were left on his hands when things again settled down in the country Charles sold, and from Mr. Hilton Barber and Mr. D. E. G. Evans, both of whom have flourishing ostrich farms, he bought some very fine specimens. To Mr. Evans he gave £200 for one cock bird, and this price was at the time a record.

Young ostriches are sweet little balls of soft downy feathers, but full-grown birds, even the quietest, are by no means nice pets. Even those that are half grown have trying ways, for they will peck suddenly at any one near them, and if a bright ornament catches their eye, they will tear it off and swallow it. There is nothing more irritating than to watch a favourite brooch or pin vanish slowly down an ostrich's long throat, the gently descending lump not seeming to cause the slightest inconvenience to the thief.

There were plenty of wild duck on a vleï—a stretch of marshy ground—less than a mile from my cousin's house, and a few snipe and partridges scattered about the veld, but the best partridge shooting of the district was on a farm at some distance. Charles used to take a waggon, and camp out there for two or three days' shooting during the season, and had excellent sport. We used often to bring in quite a nice addition to the larder as the result of an afternoon's stroll, my cousins always taking a gun



with them as a matter of course. Even near the house we often came across a snipe, and an occasional koorhan or paauw would rise up near us.

When I was at the Cape, many of the up-country Dutch still regarded our game laws in a strange way. They had shot off the innumerable herds of game that once wandered over the country, and they could not see why they should not destroy the few survivors at their pleasure. One Dutch farmer wrote to a Cape minister, whom he knew slightly, expressing his disgust at being fined for shooting buck out of season, and demanded, with perfect confidence, that the fine should be remitted on the ground of his acquaintance with the minister. I fear the answer to his request must have been a sad shock to his belief in the value of friendship.

The little Karroo birds were of great interest to me, and one day I was shown a hammer-kop's nest, a big structure high up on the river bank, and quite beyond the reach of an ordinary flood. It was exactly like a miniature native hut, being dome-shaped and built of twigs and bits of wood of all sorts. The bird itself is rather like a big brown woodpecker with a crested head suggestive of a hammer, whence its name. At intervals beside the winding river, that ran only a few hundred yards below the homestead, were groups of trees, many of which were in appearance rather like our ash trees, and from their light boughs hung numbers of fink's nests, while still more were suspended from the great reeds that rose up five or six feet in height along the river bed. These finks are delightful little birds, and very pretty to watch as they flash about over the water, their long tail feathers giving their movements peculiar grace. In the spring the cock birds are most amusing. They build four or five nests, making each one round, with a long, narrow neck, whose



only opening is from the bottom, and they are placed directly over a river in order to protect them from the wild cats, snakes, and beasts of prey. These nests are suspended from low trees or the top of high reeds, and each bird's group of nests is separate, for all the world like a Kafir's cluster of huts where his wives are apart from their neighbours in the kraal. It is a great work for the little bird to build four or five nests, but even when they are finished, his labour is only half done. The nests must be filled, and off the energetic fink darts in search of the fair, before whom he goes through the most wonderful genuflections, even standing on his head in his efforts to please. Only when a little lady is safely established in each of his nests does the poor bird rest, proud and happy, and from that moment regarding the management of his little kraal with true Kafir irresponsibility and lightness of heart. My sister used to say that South African men and birds were wonderfully alike, and that it was the improving example of ostriches, who are well known to be exemplary fathers, that accounts for colonials shining so brilliantly in that relation.

It is the Little Brak River that runs within a few hundred yards of my cousin's house, and just below it passes through a deep gully. The road to Schoombie Station crosses the river here by a drift, that in the old days was exceedingly dangerous during the rainy season. The river then came rushing down with such force that it was impossible for anything caught in crossing the drift to escape, and it was most difficult to see from the road when the water "came down," as the cutting on either side of the drift was necessarily very steep and narrow. To lessen the force of these floods Charles had, before our visit, cut a second bed for the river that connected a bend well above the drift with another bend below it, and

this wide, shallow cutting carried off a large quantity of flood water safely. At times, however, after a heavy thunderstorm, the swollen river swept down so violently that the old bed was constantly being washed away, leaving nothing but a stretch of mud, in which waggons stuck hopelessly. Charles managed in the end to get over the difficulty, driven, as he said, in self-defence to devise something, as strange waggons crossing the drift were constantly coming to grief, and then his teams of oxen were borrowed to help pull them out. He made use of an Australian method, and lashed down the river bed at the drift from bank to bank with a network of strong wire. His neighbours laughed to scorn such an unknown method—to them—of managing a refractory drift, but as it answered admirably, their laughter was soon turned into admiration.

A better kept drift I never saw in all my wanderings, and I had reason to be glad of the recent improvement, as we went that way constantly, on one of our favourite rides to Schoombie Station. We often made ourselves useful by fetching the post, instead of the native boy whose daily duty it was to go for the letters, and as the road was pretty rough, we generally chose an afternoon when we should have moonlight for our return journey. A strange experience it was to ride up to the steep cutting leading to the drift in moonlight almost as bright as day, then go down suddenly into inky darkness, leaving our horses to pick their way through the invisible water that we could hear flowing swiftly past us as we splashed through. The horses always found their way safely, and, hitting off the opposite cutting, carried us to the top, where we were once more bathed in a flood of moonlight. The cutting was so narrow and so deep that the moon's rays could only

penetrate to the water when they came from exactly overhead.

Schoombie Station had one special peculiarity—on summer afternoons when there were no thunderstorms to cloud the sky, a small mirage was always visible as you approached, and faded gradually away as you drew closer. It was nothing like the great mirage that I saw on my journey across the Orange River Colony two years later, which stretched from horizon to horizon, and seemed like a mighty lake fringed with stately palm trees, that shaded the low banks of its cool blue waters; but, all the same, the Schoombie mirage was a charming vision of a desert pool beneath its trees, and very refreshing to eyes aching from the sun glare. The station stands in a particularly stony, treeless part of the country, and is surrounded by hard, rocky kopjes, that shut out all view of the distant mountain ranges, with their eternal sense of rest and peace.

## CHAPTER IV

### A HORSE FARM

THE interest at Charles's place in the Little Karroo that dwarfed all else in comparison was his stud. Long before we went out, when I was quite a child, Charles and his wife stayed with us during one of their visits to England, and the former's purchase of Wackum—afterwards known as Sportsman—was often discussed before me. Sportsman was the beginning of his racing stud, but Charles had parted with him before he came to England in 1893, and when my sister and I went out with him in the December of that year, he took Pearl Diver to replace him. Pearl Diver was the son of Master Kildare, the sire of Melton, winner of the Derby in 1885.

On the *Norham Castle*, Pearl Diver's box was on the third-class deck forward, and one of our morning amusements was to visit him and the other horses on board. The way the third-class passengers considered a thoroughbred should be treated was a constant source of annoyance to my cousin. A favourite trick was for one of the men to approach softly and stoop below the level of the half-door till just under the horse's head, and then jump up suddenly in his face. One day, to our great joy, Pearl Diver, whose temper was hardly of the sweetest, caught a straw hat in his teeth as the owner bobbed up in front of him. He breakfasted off that hat, which, luckily, did not upset his digestion, and for the future the trick was not so popular.

The Little Karroo is a splendid country for horses, the





CHARLES SOUTHEY, C.M.G.

*To face p. 66.*



general character of my cousin's place being a level, or rather gently undulating, stretch of ground, with stony rands scattered here and there. It is watered by the Brak rivers, known as the Great and Little Brak, and when the waters are out, some two thousand acres of veld can be flooded. The effect of this flooding is to provide excellent pasture for the thoroughbred stock, while in dry weather they can revel in the vleis. Good fodder is also provided from a patch of two hundred and fifty acres of lucerne that is grown on land near the river.

The foundation of Charles's stud was laid in the year 1880, when, during a visit home, he bought four of the famous Cobham Stud mares, a stallion (Wackum), and a yearling (Wroughton) by Craigmillar, winner of the St. Leger in 1875, by Blair Athol, winner of the Derby in 1864. When we were there he had about thirty mares and foals that ran loose in large paddocks, while Pearl Diver and a few two-year-olds were stabled. A morning visit to Pearl Diver was never forgotten, and much I admired the plucky way in which Mr. Brown, the trainer, handled him. The horse had not been ridden for a long time, but Mr. Brown, thinking that it made him more handy, used to saddle him every day, and ride once or twice round the house. One morning, however, Pearl Diver was more than usually troublesome, and at last reared up and came over backwards, nearly crushing his plucky rider under him. If I remember rightly, the rides were given up after that.

Among the mares in the paddock at that time was Mrs. Veal, daughter of Robert the Devil—ran second to Bend Or in the Derby in 1880, also won the Grand Prix de Paris, the St. Leger, and the Cesarewitch, and in 1881 the Gold Cup at Ascot—whose foal, born soon after her arrival in South Africa, was by Harpingdon, by Bend Or, winner of the Derby in 1880. Unluckily, not long before the

advent of the foal, Mrs. Veal was chased by a vicious ostrich, and the little thing died a day or two after its birth. We were all much interested in finding a name for the foal, and I am proud to say that my own suggestion of The Golden Calf was the only one entertained seriously. About the best suggestion I ever heard made was for a young black horse, son of Telegraph. The owner, having just come from India, named it Tar Baby, from the Urdu word tarr (telegraph), and the colt being particularly skittish and so very black, it suited him admirably. The same friend owned an awful brute known as Satan, and this name was changed solemnly to The Archbishop, after he had carried his master for three days on parade without doing anything very terrible.

Another mare taken out at the same time as Mrs. Veal was Tempête, and among those Charles had bought previously was Landscape, by Blair Athol, and own sister to George Frederick, winner of the Derby. In 1894 he bought St. Fillan by St. Frusquin, Meridam by Hampton, Grace Trenton by Trenton, and Kaisaw by Kilwarlin. Charles looks more to the ancestors of his horses and mares than to their actual performances, and those descended from winners in the past have always been his choice, provided the blood on both sides could be traced clearly.

For those who are interested in the question of horse-breeding in South Africa, I may quote some words of my cousin on the subject. They are taken from a speech he made at a Judges' Association Meeting at Bloemfontein. "We will now turn to the thoroughbred in South Africa. As far back as the time of Lord Charles Somerset<sup>1</sup> we began the importation of this breed of horses, but previously the Dutch East India Company had been in the habit of getting Arabs down the East Coast, and no

<sup>1</sup> Governor of Cape Colony in the early part of the last century.



doubt the excellence of the old Cape horse, which was such a favourite in India, sprang from the mingling of the blood of the thoroughbred and Arab. Fifty years ago there were many breeders, both in the eastern and western provinces, who bred and raced horses, notably the Van der Byls, Coetzees, Van Zyls, Oesthuisens, and others, but although these horses were bred from thoroughbred sires, most of them were what we should call half-breeds. In 1880 I conceived the idea of breeding thoroughbreds, and the first step I took was to go to England and bring not only sires, but dams of pure blood, whose ancestors had for centuries been accustomed to compete on the race-course for victory." Charles here showed a photograph of a filly, of which he said: "She was bred in the third generation in South Africa from these imported mares. She is descended on both sides from Stockwell," winner of the Two Thousand and St. Leger in 1852, "through Craigmillar and Blair Athol, and you will notice the resemblance to her ancestors of the Eastern type. I have long held that, given the right blood and treatment, this country can breed horses equal to those of any other country in the world. I may mention as an instance, Camp Fire, bred by myself in the third generation from the imported mare, who greatly distinguished himself on the English turf in 1907, and is to-day standing at the stud there."

My cousin then dealt more particularly with the question of breeding, and said: "With regard to blood, care must be taken not to inbreed too closely, as it has been ascertained that the best horses in England have been produced in the fourth, fifth, and sixth degrees of consanguinity. Horses too closely inbred, nine times out of ten, are worthless, and I do not believe in out-crossing. Next to blood comes food and care. The two must go

together, or the result will be disappointing. At all stages the mares should be kept in good, healthy condition. A poor-conditioned mare will produce a weakling, resulting in curly hocks, calf-knees, etc., instead of that robustness and vigour which is absolutely necessary to produce a good racehorse.

"I wish to impress upon the people of this country not to look upon the thoroughbred simply as a racehorse, for the amusement of the public, but to realise the fact that constant trials of courage, speed and endurance are only the means to an end, which in the future is to supply us with an invaluable 'general purpose' horse."

The keen practical interest that Charles took in his special hobby is shown clearly by the speech from which I have quoted. He had a book on the subject of horse-breeding, written by Count Lehndorff, that he valued highly, and it came into his hands in a curious way. The book belonged originally to Mr. P. L. Russell, who was killed by General De Wet's forces, when the General burned a train in Cape Colony. It then came into the hands of Lord Osborne Beauclerk, who during the war went to see my cousin's horses, and at the end of his visit Lord Osborne gave it to Charles.

During my stay at the farm I used to enjoy going out with the youngsters that were being broken to the saddle. I remember one morning when I came in from a ride, I found the trainer just taking out a filly, Princess May, that had only been mounted once or twice before. Mr. Brown promptly inspanned me to help, and I gave him a lead by riding gently along to encourage the nervous youngster. Unluckily, I had on a white coat, and this must have caught the filly's eye suddenly, for just as we were turning down through the aloes towards the river, a sound behind me made me turn my head, and I saw Mr. Brown

and the filly sitting in a clump of aloes. I was aghast at the sight, but a serene voice reassured me: "It is all right, please go on." The trainer meantime remained motionless till his pupil felt easier in her mind, and then let her extricate them both from their uncomfortable resting place. Of course I should not have worn anything of a startling colour had I known that I was to be required as leader that morning. In their paddocks, my cousin liked us to visit the young horses in bright colours, so as to get them accustomed to what they would have to face on the racecourse. My cousin usually sold his young stock, only occasionally keeping them in his own hands. Many horses I used to notice coming to the fore on the racecourse, or at the Agricultural Shows, that I knew had been bred on the Little Karroo and had passed into different stables all over the country.

Some time after our last stay in South Africa a tragic story of a dastardly crime, or rather of a series of crimes, perpetrated on Charles's horses, reached us. For two years mysterious deaths took place among his stud, before the mischief was traced to a Hottentot groom and his accomplices. The sole reason for such cold-blooded destruction was the dismissal in disgrace from my cousin's service of the Tottie groom concerned. The man had been insolent, and had struck Charles's trainer, and for this, a serious offence in a country where a few white men have to keep order among their many native retainers, the man was prosecuted, and received a month's imprisonment. On his release from "tronk" the man obtained work on a neighbouring place, and the trouble soon began.

A groom still in my cousin's service at last turned King's evidence, and when the trial was brought on, confessed that he had been offered a large sum of money

to join in the conspiracy. Pearl Diver was the first victim. This horse was always fed on crushed oats, as it was found that he could not digest them whole, and on my cousin's return home after a few days' absence, he found Pearl Diver was ill, and it was soon discovered that his oats had been given to him whole. In spite of all that was done the grand horse died, and the disaster was attributed to the groom's carelessness in feeding him. Then one after another of the mares died mysteriously, and still the cause of their death could not be traced. As it came out later, they had been dosed at night with Cooper's Dip dissolved in water, and as the dip contains a large amount of arsenic, the poor creatures had died in dreadful agony. At last a mare named Wallflower was discovered to be suffering in the same way that the others had done, but in her case her neck was ricked, and it was this that first gave the idea of foul play. The mare had presumably given the conspirators more trouble than her companions had done, and she had been tied up to the wire fence before they could succeed in dosing her. In her desperate struggles her neck had been twisted, and this accident led to the scheme for destroying the whole stud being found out. Already, however, £10,000 worth of damage had been done; besides Pearl Diver and another imported sire, St. Fillan—by St. Frusquin, and whose maternal grandsire was by Isonomy, winner of the Gold Cup at Ascot in 1879 and again in 1880—the most valuable young sire that has ever been imported into South Africa, the thoroughbred South African mares, five imported thoroughbred mares and two yearlings were among the victims.

The trial of the perpetrators of these singularly cold-blooded crimes can only be described as a disgrace to the name of justice. The dismissed groom was convicted and



given three and a half years' imprisonment and a fine of £50, and failing the payment of the latter he was to have another year. His accomplice on the place where he was in service at the time of the outrages was acquitted in spite of the clearest evidence of his guilt. The latter was received by his friends with open arms, and was treated as a hero, and the informer of course went scot free.

Not daunted even by such crushing misfortunes, Charles cabled to England for Patron Saint to be sent out to him, and with the few that remained of his former stud he has done well. Patron Saint is by St. Frusquin, and through his dam St. Helen strains back to Hermit. This colt was the winner of five races, of the total value of £1,800, while the performances of his dam at home are well known. In 1909 Charles had a particularly promising colt by Patron Saint, whose dam was Grace Trenton, and in the same year he had the finest string of yearlings at the Johannesburg Show that have ever been seen in a South African show ring.

Of the earlier horses, Forest King, by Wroughton, won the Johannesburg Handicap as a three-year-old. From Pearl Diver came quite a host of winners, his stock winning the Port Elizabeth Derby six years in succession, and carrying off the Nursery Gold Cup at Johannesburg. Pearl Rover never ran in South Africa, but was sent to England, where he won two important handicaps, and was placed every time he ran. There were also Peerless, Ocean Gem, Pearl Finder, Verdant Green, and Princess May, who were winners of good races, and many others, among them Fillette, daughter of St. Fillan, ran third in the South African Nursery Plate, and in 1908 won the South African Derby.

Beside the racing stud and the ostriches, of which I have spoken already, there were between twenty and



thirty horses kept for ordinary use at the homestead, a herd of thoroughbred shorthorn cattle, besides country-bred cattle for working purposes, and a small flock of sheep to supply mutton to the household. Thus with dogs and cats, there was no lack of domestic animals about the place, and wild animals were equally abundant.

About five hundred springbuck wandered in perfect freedom over the land, safe from straying beyond the wide boundaries of the farm, owing to its being completely wire fenced. Such pretty creatures these buck are, and though during the shooting season they are difficult to approach, even then they would sometimes let us get near enough, when we were driving or walking, to watch their graceful movements. Their coats, bright chestnut, with a line of white running down the back, and nearly white on the under part of the body, shone brilliantly in the sunshine; and when in "pranking," as it is called, they jumped high in the air, they made the prettiest picture possible, with the long line of white flashing as the hair stood on end. Anything will set a herd pranking, and a dog barking, however far away, is sure to do so. Another curious sight was to watch them crossing a road. They never grew used to its strange whiteness, and always jumped clean over it, in single file and at full gallop.

Springbuck shooting is splendid sport, and I was very glad to be up during the shooting season. The buck are approached on horseback, but are usually shot on foot, and very often over the back of the horse who is trained for this purpose. Only the most modern rifles are of any use with such wary game, and their tenacity of life is simply wonderful. As Charles and his son Claud were among the best shots in the colony, they almost always

hit their buck behind the shoulder, killing it at the first shot; but on one occasion a buck sprang round so quickly that Claud's bullet hit the hind quarter, smashing the bone, and leaving the poor creature's leg hanging helplessly. Yet it flew off at a tremendous pace on its remaining three legs, and it was all Claud could do, well mounted as he was, to get near enough to shoot it and put it out of its pain.

By a strange chance, when galloping after this wounded springbuck, Claud rode right through the herd, a thing I never saw done again. He could have jumped down and shot one or two of the buck with perfect ease, but he had no thought for them until he had killed the wounded animal, and by the time this was accomplished the rest had taken fright and were already miles away. It is no wonder that our colonists who care for shooting do it well. Charles's youngest son, then aged six, was quite a good shot with a small gun, and would solemnly go out by himself—a careful watch being kept upon his movements from a distance—and bring in a bird or two. By this time, doubtless, he can kill his buck at five hundred yards, as I have seen his father and elder brother do, though the usual distance is three hundred yards.

What I enjoyed most was a small shoot when I went out with only three or four guns. I remember one glorious day when we went off like this. I was riding a handsome chestnut about 14 hands, who took kindly to the novelty of my habit, and never thought of buck-jumping with me, though he was not altogether innocent of that little vice. My mount was certainly gun-shy, but that added variety to our day, as his feelings had to be considered. At least he was an animal of character, for he had been trained as a shooting horse, but having made up his mind that he did not like the work, decided once and for all not to do it.

As soon as we reached a suitable ground after the herd of springbuck had been located, our party separated, my younger cousins going off round a small rand to escape observation till the moment arrived for driving the buck towards Charles and myself, who lay in wait on a kopje, sheltered from view by a rampart of rocks that lay massed on the top. Charles stood before an opening between the rocks, his horse quietly feeding the while, with the reins hanging over its head. I was divided between excited watching of the veld in front, and steadying my horse, who objected on general principles to the whole proceeding. The whole world seemed to me to be waiting and listening for the coming shot, even the as-vogels, wheeling far above against the blue sky, were watching intently. Then across the plain below us bounded the buck, one fine male with a splendid head, scenting the drivers, paused a second to sniff at the tainted air, and instantly a shot rang out, and the beautiful creature sprang up and fell back dead. By midday each gun had secured two or three buck, and as sport and not big bags was our object, we repaired to the spot chosen for luncheon before we left home. There we found the Cape cart outspanned, and Mrs. Charlie and her governess and children already superintending the preparation of a meal for the hungry shooters.

These lunches were a great feature of our day, and had quite a character of their own, among other good things their great points being hot coffee and chops, and cold chicken pie. Two fires were built up of odds and ends of a woody nature, collected with some difficulty by the children and native boys, for trees are conspicuous only by their absence on the open veld of the Little Karroo. There was always one blazing fire upon which the kettle for coffee stood, and another smouldering fire for the

gridiron of chops. As the flaming fire died down to glowing embers and the smouldering one grew cool, the kettle and gridiron changed places, fresh fuel was piled on the dying fire, and by constant changes coffee and chops, hot and hot, were always ready as wanted. And our appetites were healthy, for springbuck shooting means hard riding and plenty of it.

After luncheon it was usually too hot to do much, and though the men would perhaps go off for a last stalk, the rest of us would sit lazily about in the sun, finding sufficient employment in keeping the as-vogels off the dead buck that lay round us till they were packed in the Cape cart for home. These great vultures used to fill me with loathing, though on my cousin's land there were not nearly so many as in most parts of the country, for Charles would never allow dead animals to lie unburied and thus attract them, and both he and Claud waged constant warfare against them. Still the dead bucks would always attract one or more of the scavengers, who from the immense height where they rested, poised on their huge wings, were searching the earth beneath them for prey. Their rage was great when they were driven off, and I have known one almost strike us with his powerful wings in his efforts to seize one of the buck we were guarding. As evening drew in we would once more gather round the fires, and more coffee would be the order of the day, the hobbled horses meantime being driven up and all prepared for the start homewards. Very attractive the homestead looked when the tired party came in sight of it. Bright lights gleamed a welcome, and cheerful sounds of dinner echoed from the kitchen regions as we made our way round to the front.

Very pleasant, too, were the quiet little shoots when either Charles or Claud went out to get a buck to replenish



the larder, and on these occasions the children and I were always ready to act as beaters. We enjoyed creeping along behind any rising ground that would give us shelter till the moment came for action. Then in open line we rushed wildly over the open ground, ready to head off the buck if they tried to break in the wrong direction. Of course, this harum-scarum method of driving made the herd too wild for any hope of more than one shot, but as a single buck for the pot was all we wanted, that did not matter. On one of these expeditions we penetrated to an unfrequented part of the farm, a barren, stony bit of country, where a low rocky rand was broken into kopjes of all sizes. The place was a pretty sure refuge for springbuck, as the ground being bad for horses, it was generally avoided in mercy to their often unshod hoofs. We pulled up on the outskirts, and though no shot came to reward us for our long ride, we had a very pretty sight. On the sky line of the low range of hills before us a small herd of springbuck was moving, and in its midst was a buck of snowy whiteness. It had been thought for some time that an albino buck was somewhere on the farm, and orders had been given that on no account was it to be shot, but no one had seen it closely before we were fortunate enough to come across it, to be sure that it was perfectly white. There were two or three other bucks in the herd that were nearly white, and their glossy coats were very beautiful as they flashed in the sunlight against a background of vivid blue sky and dull grey rock.

When I went to stay for a few days with Uncle Harry at the Putts, I saw springbuck shooting from yet another point of view. I was very keen to go out in the rocky unenclosed stretch of country that lay outside Charles's wire fence, where a small number of buck were to be found. At the time of my visit to the Putts, a married cousin and



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her husband were staying there, and Mr. Greaves and I planned some expeditions after buck on foot. We used to walk in the afternoon to a low line of hills that commanded a likely bit of country, keeping a good look out for springbuck on our way. Then, after locating our future victim, we would rest and talk in low tones, till the sun had all but touched the range of purple mountains that stretched in front of us. We timed our stalk carefully, so that the buck passed within range just between sunset and the time when the light faded, a very brief period on the Little Karroo, but the best time for shooting.

Mr. Greaves would take up a position that I marked carefully, for his tall figure would disappear behind a rock or ant heap, and he seemed to melt into the ground in the marvellous way the Boers do before an enemy. Then I slipped round behind the rocky line of hills till I could head the buck and drive them down upon the waiting gun. The springbuck were not so shy as they are when driven on horseback, and I was generally successful in getting one out of the four or five I drove, about 300 yards in front of Mr. Greaves's shelter. When sure that the quarry was going in the right direction I would stop and watch events, intensely excited till the expected shot rang out, and the buck lay dead before me. We only had one failure when the stalk was a very awkward one, being over unsuitable ground, and the wind being unfavourable. My companion, too, had a most uncomfortable cramped position, and thinking that there was no chance of a shot, he moved away just as the buck sprang gracefully over the veld in the desired direction. After a momentary disappointment, I really was not sorry that the buck had escaped to enjoy his life a little longer. On these expeditions I used to wear a short, leather bound shooting skirt, which as I walked brushed the top of the short Karroo bush, the result



being that the leather binding was rasped regularly and evenly all over, and my high tan boots were the same. The rasping was so fine and even that I considered it rather an improvement than otherwise.

Mr. Greaves was a most interesting companion, for he had been at Kimberley during the early days of the rush to the diamond fields, when the place was a huge camp of miners gathered from all parts of the world. In those days the miners were a law to themselves, and knew no other control. Very vigorously they kept order according to their lights, and administered justice with great promptness and impartiality. An account that Mr. Greaves gave me of the first visit paid by ladies to the camp amused me greatly. "We had not seen a white woman for so long that we were not only excited, but frightened at the advent of these ladies. When they walked through the camp we behaved consequently in the most ridiculous way, though we were all clean and brushed up specially for the great occasion. Yet sooner than come face to face with them, we one and all bolted behind rocks or into tents, and from our shelters peeped out at them like frightened rabbits." The visitors must certainly have thought it an extraordinary place, where the inhabitants only showed brief visions of heads or flying boots.

At the Putts, the little meerkats were a constant source of delight to me. They were the merriest little creatures, something like mouse-coloured squirrels, but with no desire to climb, so that they did not feel the total lack of trees about the place. The Putts was a real old Dutch farmhouse, low and white, and with its stone stoep and pleasant garden stood right out on the open veld, with only its own farm buildings round. As there was no farming done to cause a bustle and disturb them, the meerkats would come up close to the house and watch our proceedings with the

greatest show of interest. They were both bold and inquisitive, and would sit up in their quaint fashion, darting quick beady glances in all directions, and taking the greatest interest in all that was going on. Then, if startled, they would flash off like arrows across the road and into their holes that honeycombed the ground on the other side, only to reappear when all was quiet, and resume their investigations. I have known a meerkat race alongside a Cape cart for some distance, staring up at the cart, and apparently studying it as intently as if it meant to set up such a conveyance for its own use, and only leaving us when satisfied that it had mastered all details. As a pet there is much to be said for the meerkat, the only drawback being an unconquerable affection he has for scratching furniture, and the probability that he will sooner or later be killed by a dog in mistake for a rat.

A most amusing neighbour of Uncle Harry's was a perfectly delightful boy, a real "rooi-nek" English lad, who was learning to farm, and kept all the colonial farmers round in a constant state of hilarity by his blunders. He managed to do everything he started wrong, and enjoyed the often most startling results of his efforts as heartily as did his more experienced neighbours. A public school education, for instance, had not provided instruction as to loading up a Scotch cart with pumpkins, or taught him that if the cart is not properly fixed before starting, directly the oxen move the cart will tilt up and scatter the load in all directions. This little variety in pumpkin harvesting was his latest when I arrived at the Putts, and I heard, endless tales of his other exploits.

One Sunday this lad wandered over to visit us armed with a pitchfork. I imagine that he thought the implement gave him a farming appearance, though I cannot say that I ever saw a real Cape farmer carrying one. Anyway,

firearms were strictly forbidden on Sundays by general consent up-country in the old colony, and on this occasion the pitchfork proved a handy weapon. As he came up to the house, the boy saw a puff-adder under a hedge of aloes, and he pinned it to the ground promptly with one prong of his fork, and came to fetch us to see his prey. We all rushed out, and there was the puff-adder, a full-grown one, but so far under the shelter of the spiky aloes that it was impossible to kill it. No gun being allowed, the proper method of killing it was to break its back with a sharp cutting blow from a stick; but the aloe leaves, stretching so thickly above and round the snake, prevented this from being done. The predicament was absurd, for there were three white men and several natives, not to mention myself, all nonplussed by one helpless snake. And we lost it after all, for when, as a last resource, its original captor loosened the pitchfork, meaning to drag the snake from under its shelter, it simply gave a wriggle, slipped off the prong, and vanished among the aloes, apparently none the worse for its adventure. And all through it being Sunday!

The men of the Middleburg district just then were particularly keen about killing puff-adders, about the most fatal snake in South Africa, because if disturbed it is too lazy to move, and instead of gliding away as others of its kind do, it stays and strikes from pure disinclination to exertion. Just before my visit a little girl, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, had been bitten by one, and died in spite of all that could be done for her. The poor child was out for a walk with her governess, and jumped over a tiny spruit right on to the snake. She was hurried home and given Croft's tincture, the great Cape remedy, but it was of no avail, and her sad fate caused a great onslaught to be made on puff-adders in the district.

One has many adventures with these snakes, and while I was staying with Charles, one of them did its best to pay me a visit during the night. Owing to the great heat at the time, the ceiling of my bedroom had cracked along the top of the wall just over my bed. There was quite a long rift, but as it did not show much, and workmen were not to be had to repair damages at a moment's notice, I thought nothing of it, and was surprised when my hostess, without giving any reason, suddenly changed my quarters. Later on, with due regard for my nerves, it was broken to me that a puff-adder had been discovered in the roof over my room, spending its time industriously in trying to squeeze through the crack and get down. It must have been there all the last night while I was slumbering, in happy unconsciousness of the threatened invasion, and it was lucky for me that it was discovered before hunger had thinned it down sufficiently to get through, for even fat puff-adders are horribly compressible. The story of its presence was only told me after the snake had been killed, the ceiling mended, and I could return safely to my room. In the meantime I had been sleeping in Claud's room, and when he returned home after a few days' absence, no one remembered to warn him of my invasion, and one morning he walked in to find me doing my hair comfortably in front of his glass. He was not much disconcerted, for in the hospitable colony men take being turned unceremoniously out of their rooms for visitors as a matter of course, and the house being full up, Claud contented himself with a shake-down in the trainer's room till his own was free.

When we were at Entabene, our first house near Maritzburg, I all but jumped on to a puff-adder. After luncheon, just in the hottest time of the day, I felt that grapes would be refreshing, so set off across the



grounds to the vineyard, on my way jumping a low hedge into the drive, the sides of which were choked up with fallen leaves. I heard a rustle close to my feet as I landed, but I did not stop, and should never have thought about it again if, on my return, I had not found a puff-adder lying among the leaves close to the dwarf hedge. In my surprise and fear lest it should escape, I shouted "Nyok! Nyok!" which was my rendering of the word snake in Zulu, and our native servants flew out from the house, and soon dispatched my enemy by hitting it with long sticks. Then I bitterly regretted my haste, for if I had only kept my wits about me and fetched my revolver, I might have killed it myself. At our other house near Maritzburg we had a sporting cat, with a most objectionable taste for bagging young puff-adders. She found them somewhere behind the stables, and obviously hunted for the pot, as she would walk unconcernedly about the house with a snake's head or tail hanging from her mouth, and this would disappear down her throat directly she was chased. I have known her drop one in the dining-room just as we were sitting down to luncheon, and our meal had to wait till the small umfaan had unearthed the snake from beneath a bureau. We had no idea whether it was dead or alive, and one could scarcely sit comfortably at table with the possibility of a puff-adder suddenly making its presence felt.

My sister was once much amused when paying a call at Eshowe, in Zululand. Her hostess, the Resident's wife, said pleasantly, after the usual greetings: "Do sit here, but I will just look at the cushion first, for last night when we came in after dinner there was a snake curled up on it, and one of our guests all but sat on it." So Maggie watched while the chair was examined, to make sure that a snake was not already in possession.

On moonlight nights it was a great amusement to me to watch the spring-haas from the veranda of my cousin's house. All over the open space about the house there were numbers of these queer creatures' holes, and at night they came out and gambolled in the most frolicsome way quite close to the house. Their long hind legs made them look like small kangaroos when they moved along in huge jumps, or sat up, quaint, upright, furry little figures in the bright moonlight. I feel guilty because I said one evening that I should like to have a spring-haas' skin, and one was shot for me in consequence. The little things had been such friends of mine that I could not bear to look at the great soft eyes of the dead one as it lay before me, and I could not but feel that I had what I deserved when its skin never came into my possession after all. A native servant not knowing that it was wanted, probably carried the body off for food, and nothing could ever be heard either of it or the skin.

Out on the veld we sometimes found huge land tortoises, who directly they suspected danger drew their heads and flappers completely under their protecting armour. By these means they hoped to escape notice but we enlightened them on this point by standing on their backs, and though this could not hurt them, they gave vent to their displeasure at being touched, by darting out their absurd little snaky heads and emitting hissing sounds of evident disapproval. The locust swarms are a terrible scourge both in the Middleburg and Queenstown districts, and when a swarm settles on the railway line, the trains have sometimes to be stopped, as owing to the grease from the locusts' bodies, the wheels cannot grip the rails. Strenuous efforts are made to prevent the creatures settling on "the lands," as the cultivated enclosures are

called, for to lose valuable crops is even worse than to have the veld pasturage eaten off.

The first time I heard natives driving on locusts I could only suppose they had all suddenly gone mad, for the pandemonium of noise was only suggestive of Bedlam. Paraffin tins were banged in all directions, and the natives shouted, yelled and beat about them frantically with mimosa boughs, till even the locusts thought better of it, and flew on to quieter regions.

Later, when I was staying with the McDonalds in the Upper Zwart Kei, I took an active part in saving some crops from the depredations of the locusts. We all turned out into the mealie field and walked up and down between the rows of plants with a mimosa bough in each hand, and beating on either side as we moved. We succeeded in saving most of the crop, as the main body of locusts flew on, but many stragglers settled in spite of our efforts, and eat up all they could of the tempting young shoots. Nothing could be done to save the pasturage, and after a long-looked-for shower had covered the parched, brown veld with a wealth of tenderest green, it was sad to see it all once more dead and colourless when the swarm had passed over. Locust birds following up the swarm have been pointed out to me, and they were so gorged by their abundant food supply that they could scarcely move. They looked exactly like vultures after a feast, and displayed the same stupid, dull indifference to the proximity of human beings that I have seen in the as-vogels.

Wire fencing had spoiled jackal-hunting in the Middleburg district before my stay there, but one sporting farmer still kept up a scratch pack of hounds, and we talked of goin over to his place and getting up a hunt. The expedition never came off, however, for the rapidly increasing

wire fences made anything in the shape of a run almost impossible, and we decided that the game was not worth the candle. It is a great pity that the hunt of the jackals has had to be given up, for the creatures are plentiful, and do much damage. The peculiar sobbing notes of the jackal's cry always seemed to me to be the true voice of the wilderness, and I was really sorry that they had to be killed off on account of their ravages among the lambs. They are wily animals, and not at all easy to exterminate, though my cousins gave the natives two shillings for every skin brought in, and said they would have given ten shillings a head if it would have produced more. The natives used to stuff pieces of meat with strychnine, and leave them about near the sheep kraals, but, alas, household dogs were often the victims of these well-meant efforts, instead of the wary lamb stealers.

Otters as well as the jackals had to be kept down, because the former did so much damage to the fish, or, at least, such was the popular opinion. In consequence, the otters were shot, and I had the skin of a fine dog-otter that was shot on the bank of the river on Charles's place. When we came out on the *Norham Castle*, Mr. Budgett, master of the otter hunt of which we were members at home, was a passenger to Madeira. Mr. Budgett and my cousin often discussed the question of bringing out the former's pack for a season on the Great and Little Brak Rivers, but they decided it could not be done, one of the chief difficulties being that the otters were so fierce and numerous that they were quite capable of turning hunters to the hounds, instead of allowing themselves to be hunted.

A leopard-hunt was one of the things I desired to see, but never accomplished. They were very scarce on the Little Karroo, but one was known to lurk in the



fastnesses of the Doornberg, a wild mountain whose bold krantzes and deep kloofs afforded almost inaccessible refuges for wild animals. Rooibuck were also to be found in the Doornberg, the misty outlines of which were not visible from my cousin's, but could be seen from The Putts, only twelve miles away. The talked of hunting expedition to the lonely fastnesses of the mysterious Doornberg remained, however, among the might-have-beens, and as leopards are only to be found in the wilder parts of the country, I never had a chance of hunting them.

## CHAPTER V

### THE GOLDEN CITY

I MAY confess at once that I was much more impressed with the dust of Johannesburg, the Golden City, than with its gold. Yet signs of the latter were everywhere, and tinged every phase of life with its shadow. Not for one instant could the concrete fact of present gold be forgotten. As my stay in the place only extended over a few weeks, and for the greater part of the time I was suffering from an attack of influenza, my view may have been jaundiced, but it cannot be denied that life in Johannesburg has its drawbacks.

I went up to stay with my cousins, the George Murrays, some eighteen months after my visit to Charles Southey at Schoombie, but my sister, who went on to Johannesburg while I was with the Southneys, made a longer stay in the place. I shall therefore combine Maggie's impressions with my own. The amount of luggage with which my sister travelled was a perpetual source of astonishment to our friends and to the railway officials, for in South Africa the luggage is weighed severely, both for rail and post-cart, and heavy excess charges are made for overweight. However, she always managed to get her many and heavy trunks taken without much trouble, and her experience on her journey to Johannesburg was no exception. When she started from the junction where she joined the main line from Cape Town, the station master remonstrated gravely at the heap of baggage that was to be changed to the mail train. As there were no porters at this—or,

indeed, any other of the smaller stations—there were difficulties about the transfer. Yet he gave way, and ended by passing the whole, remarking resignedly, “Well, I suppose they must go, as you say you never pay excess, and your name is Southey”—by no means the only time when the popularity of Uncle Richard and his sons helped us over a difficulty in the country.

At that time Johannesburg was in its wildest state of mining excitement, and it was much the same when I was there before the Jameson Raid. The gold fever was at its height, and as one financier friend said to Maggie when he took her over the Exchange: “You can hear the telegraph wires overhead humming from the excitement going on below.” Fortunes were being made—and lost—shares were bounding up, and nothing was to be thought or heard of but gold, gold, gold. Paul Kruger is said to have remarked grimly, that Heaven could not really be paved with gold, or the English would have made a ladder up to it long ago—a rude and characteristic speech of the old man, but for which there was some excuse in the existing state of things in the Golden City.

Another confession I must make is that I took so little interest in the prevailing rage for gold that I never even went down a gold mine. My sister was more adventurous, for she went down the Robinson mine and was shown all the workings. Our cousin, Dr. George Murray, was well known and very popular in Johannesburg, and as he knew the manager of the Robinson mine, he arranged the visit for her. The mining dresses provided for visitors were rather like sailors’ oilskins, and these with big hats and huge boots were more useful than becoming. The trollies in which they were run down steep slopes to the different levels were rather suggestive of the water-shoot



SIR RICHARD SOUTHEY, K.C.M.G.

*To face p. 90.*





at Earl's Court, but down, down they went till at last the bottom of the mine was reached.

Cornish miners were then doing all the white man's work in the mines, and natives gathered from every part of the country did the rest, and for both white and coloured man the pay was high. My sister was given a bit of gold ore, but, like the gold dust given her from the Denny Dalton mine, in Zululand, she lost it promptly. During her visit there was a big native dance given at one of the mines, to which she went. The natives, among whom were a large number of Zulus, were collected from other mines besides the one that gave the entertainment, and a most impressive gathering it was. A war dance of Kafirs is much more suggestive of battle than of peaceful exercise, and thousands of bare feet beat the ground in rhythm, sending up great clouds of dust as they did so.

Society was certainly a little mixed in those wild days in the life of the Golden City, but no one could call it dull. The men seemed mostly to pass their days rushing about Commissioner Street, and between twelve and one o'clock they were sometimes packed so thickly that you could almost have walked on their heads. The fever of gambling in shares held them, and the consequent strain and rush showed even in the figures of the ever-hurrying throng. I used often to go out with my cousin in his buggy, and when I waited while he was inside some office in Commissioner Street, I would sit and watch the eager faces, many of which were decidedly Hebraic in type, as they pressed past me. They were curious studies, and a never-failing interest and wonder to me. I can understand the rough pioneer miner who goes to try his fortune with pick and shovel, half out of sheer love of adventure, but the gambler in shares is outside my understanding altogether.

To English eyes Johannesburg is a curious looking

town. It is built on the southern slope of the Rand, a stretch of rocky hill, dry, hard and barren, and presenting an eye-aching spectacle in a drought, as when I saw it. The central streets are lined with large showy shops and stately public buildings, such as the Exchange and the big banks, and the mud roads are—or rather were, for I am speaking of the town as it was in 1894-5—cut into deep gullies at each crossing to allow the water to run off, and this, when it did come, rushed down with the usual South African violence. In a dust storm the Rand was at its zenith of unpleasantness. I was out in one, and a funnier object than I was on my return never was seen. I had sat huddled up in the buggy under stifling wraps, but, all the same, when I emerged I was perfectly black, a coal cart having passed to windward of us. The difficulty was to get me clean, as we had hardly any water.

The proverbial Rand joke that there was nothing to wash in but soda-water was in full swing just then, and though in my cousin's household we managed better than that, it was only a very little better. A kind friend—one of the leading reformers by the way—gave Doctor Murray his daily bath, for this friend lived outside the town area, and had a well of his own that held out splendidly. The rest of us did not fare so well, and beside the water kept for drinking purposes, we did go one whole day on the contents of my bedroom water-bottle. Of this I fear I was given an unfair share, true kindness to a visitor. In a few days water came round for sale at high prices, but for a long time all the animals had to be watered at a spruit outside the town. A nice business this was, as there were three horses, a cow, several Irish setters and a bulldog, and the dry heat made the poor creatures suffer terribly from thirst.

At last the drought became so severe that the Dutch

Government proclaimed a Day of Humiliation, in order, as everyone said, "to expiate the sins of the English." The latter, I fear, hardly took the day seriously, but as all the offices and shops were closed in obedience to the order, they gadded off on picnics and other festivities, with comfortable assurance that no rain would come to spoil their smart clothes. And no rain did come on the following days, so now the Government had recourse to a firework firm, who undertook a strange contract cheerfully. The campaign opened with a furious bombardment directed towards a few clouds lying near the horizon. The outbursts of firing were so frequent that we soon became used to living among the booming of guns. Then some one wrote to a local paper, saying it was unsafe to have mortars pounding and bombs exploding, to which an answer was given promptly that no bombs exploded within three miles of the town. The retort followed that people were driving about the country, and were their lives not to be considered? The controversy was warm, but how it ended I do not know, as at this point I left Johannesburg. Up to the hour of my departure the bombs were still exploding, and were followed by short bursts of rain. Three people were killed by lightning, but I did not hear if their deaths were attributed to the Day of Humiliation, the fireworks, or pure accident. Neither did I hear if in the end mortars were decided to be successful rain doctors. I do remember that I objected strongly to the lightning, for my cousin's house was near the central telephone building, and there were too many wires about to please me, though the telephone was always switched off in the house whenever the storm was directly overhead.

Outside the main streets of the town and the open market place, the mines were scattered about the Rand.



They were great ugly enclosures with lofty chimneys, long, low rows of buildings for the natives, and great heaps of tailings piled up outside the walls. Over all a general impression of machinery and corrugated iron, while the humming, roaring sound of the stamps at work pervaded the air and made it vibrate to the sound of gold. And yet, as I have said, *dirt* was the deepest impression that the Golden City left upon me. I was amused to hear that a well-known actress had remarked after a visit to Johannesburg that for her part she preferred a little more cleanliness, both moral and physical, than was to be found there. Perhaps, like myself, she wished that some of the brilliantly coloured ladies she saw in the streets had washed before putting on those charming roses that adorned their cheeks.

Still there is no doubt that life in Johannesburg was amusing, with its strange contrasts of squalor and luxury. Champagne flowed at a fabulous price, and flowers, costly to grow or buy, were given away lavishly. My sister always declares that she never had so many flowers given her as at Johannesburg, where their price was so enormously dear. Maggie certainly had the gayest of times there, dances, dinners and the theatre filling up every evening, till she collapsed with the influenza, or "camp-fever," as it is often called. I think it was the terrible dust that made the influenza scourge so bad, for the streets being unpaved were always either dust or mud. It was one of the Uitlanders' just grievances that though they paid such enormous taxes, hardly anything was spent on the town, all the money, they declared, being sent to Pretoria.

A short time before my sister went up, an attempt had been made at the theatre to substitute the Dutch national anthem for ours. The attempt ended in a disastrous

failure, for the house rose *en masse*, tore up benches, and would have wrecked the theatre had the band continued. Feeling ran high when I was there, but though many of the reformers were personal friends of my cousin, they left him in ignorance of their plans, as they considered that a medical man should not be involved. Though I met many of the men whose names came so prominently before the world in the raid a few weeks later, I had no idea when I left the place of what was going on. I was only sorry afterwards that I had missed that stirring time.

A little later, when I was travelling from Queenstown to Cape Town on my way to England, a gay young Dutchman and a young Englishman were in the carriage with me. The former bragged of having been one of the Dutch who attacked Jameson's men. I do not know what my fellow Briton thought, as he listened quietly, but I longed to shake the blatant youth as he gloated over his deeds in shooting the English. He was most polite to me on the journey, but in spite of the many little services he insisted on rendering me, I simply loathed him.

We had several witnesses for the Jameson trial on board the R.M.S. *Athenian* and some of the less prominent reformers, who, as they had not been put in prison, thought that a change of air would agree with them for a time. In spite of their troubles, these cheerful Uitlanders were as gay as ever, and were a constant source of amusement with tales of their doings during and after the raid. This voyage lives in my memory as the most crowded and the noisiest that I have ever experienced. There was no doubt that the ex-reformers were still feeling the after-excitement of the stirring times through which they had been, and they sought relief in gambling. The sweepstakes that are usually so low that the interest attaching to them comes simply as a break in the

monotony of life on board ship were with these men serious affairs, and I have known a sum of £80 or more to change hands at one table in the course of a morning. Many other forms of excitement appealed to these men, and at last their pranks were beyond a joke, and a day of reckoning came. When we reached Madeira, the vessel had to be stopped for an hour while the Portuguese officer's sword was searched for. At Funchal, the Portuguese customs officer stands at the head of the gangway of any ship that anchors there, and the sight of his pretty, tin-soldierlike figure was too much for one of the Johannesburg party, who bided his time till he had an opportunity of abstracting the officer's sword. It was late in the evening when this occurred, and the neat-fingered gentleman went calmly off to his berth carrying the sword with him. As soon as its loss was discovered there was a great commotion, during which the culprit slept calmly ; but at last a steward, who had seen him on his way to his cabin with the sword under his arm, made a raid in his turn, and returned the missing weapon.

Another playful incident nearly ended in disaster. A young up-country colonial had made himself unpopular on the ship, and one night the irrepressibles went to his cabin and made hay with a quantity of Cape jam and other stores that he was taking to England. The sufferer by this exploit turned a silly joke into a serious quarrel, and the invaders at last went for him. He was terrified, and flew on deck, and failing to get into safety on the bridge, turned upon his tormentors with a knife in his hand. This brought about a general row, and the next day the captain descended on the ringleaders, and for the few days that remained of the voyage unwonted peace reigned, though the sufferer continued to wail over his spoilt jam to the end.

It was on this voyage that I fear I won a character of hopeless frivolity with many of my fellow-passengers at starting. I was much depressed at leaving, and the last farewells of those who came to see me off were quite too much for me. I had, indeed, been sitting in a collapsed, damp-eyed heap on (somebody else's) luggage, and it was not till we were at last off that I began to revive. When the strains of "The Girl I Left Behind Me" wailed over the water, I could not help murmuring to some acquaintance who stood near, "It ought to be 'The Boy I Left Behind Me,' for I am always the one to go away." This accurate way of stating my sentiments brought no sympathy, but many looks of shocked surprise were turned on me.

To return, however, to Johannesburg. Life there, as I have said, was never dull, and among other things that kept us alive were the unwelcome visits of burglars. During my visit to the Murrays, no less than three attempts were made on the house, though it was considered that a doctor's house ought to be safer than any other, owing to the chance of someone being about at any hour of the day or night. In consequence of this state of things, every window had to be kept shut at night in spite of the heat, and each one was secured with special fastenings. The dogs were, of course, a great protection, and frustrated each of the threatened midnight irruptions. Snarley-Yow, the bull-dog, was indeed a formidable foe to reckon with, as he was a particularly pugnacious-looking dog. In his own family, though, he was the most amiable of beasties, and every morning he would come into my room with my early cup of tea and sit by my bedside goggling affectionately at me. His days were often spent in wanderings on his own, and from these he would bring back the marks of warfare that had to be dressed by his devoted owners.



A mild attempt at burglary was brought off successfully while all the family was about. During the evening a man came to the front door with some tale about a sick person wanting to see the doctor, and he found occasion to help himself to every coat, mackintosh and umbrella that were in the hall. He got off safely, so the next day the drought was for once a convenience, for no one in the household, except myself, had any available wraps in case of rain. I escaped well in this affair, as, fortunately for me, there was nothing of mine in the hall at the time of the thief's visitation. Yet the Golden City had seen worse days than those. When my cousin first went up to the Rand, burglaries were so common that they were hardly noticed, and murders were perpetrated quite close to the "camp"—as it was then called. No one, indeed, dreamed of going out after nightfall unarmed, and life was as uncertain as it was exciting.

A peculiarly aggravating theft was suffered by a friend of ours, who was killed later in a sortie from Ladysmith during the siege. He was lying ill with pneumonia in Johannesburg and happened to be alone for a short time, his nurse having gone out. Presently a strange man came in, and finding that the invalid, though conscious, was too ill to move, the visitor calmly annexed everything that took his fancy in the way of clothes and other things, and quietly walked off with his spoils.

The Johannesburg race meetings used to be about the best in the country, and were patronised not only by the Rand people, but by sportsmen from all parts of South Africa. While my sister was up she saw Forest King, a horse bred by Charles Southey, win the principal race at one of these meetings. It was a popular win, for the horse was a splendid animal, but I forget to whom he belonged at the time, for Charles had sold him as a

youngster. It was at this meeting that Maggie met Mr. Hilton Barber, a friend of our cousin Charles, and one of the best sportsmen at that time in South Africa, as well as Mr. Abe Bailey. We neither of us happened to meet Dr. Jameson at Johannesburg or Cape Town, as he was in Rhodesia, I believe, during our stay in both places, but my brother-in-law knew him well. A brother of his lived in Johannesburg, but as he was ill when I was there, I did not see him.

It was outside Mr. Jameson's house, where I was waiting in the buggy while my cousin was inside, that a curious thing happened. I was disturbed from the book I was reading by a movement of one of the horses, and I saw that a chestnut horse named Jimmy was actually standing on the top of the bank that edged the road. As any interference with him promised to spell disaster, and I considered that as he had managed to get up without upsetting either the buggy or his companion, so possibly he could come down, I did nothing. Presently I was relieved when Jimmy dropped quietly back into the road without damage to himself, the harness, or trap, though I have never quite made out how he managed to get up, much less down, without breaking anything.

Some of the houses round Johannesburg, especially those in Doornfontein, were very pretty, for, as they belonged to rich men, no expense had been spared in making them charming. The drives over the rolling open veld round the Rand were delightful, and there were gardens a few miles out of the town to which people were fond of driving for tea. In the town itself, one house was a constant source of amusement to me. It was large, and standing as it did right in the town, it had only a narrow strip of ground, a few feet wide, between it and the road. But in that narrow strip a flagstaff was planted,

and always there floated from it a huge Union Jack, defiantly braving "the battle and the breeze," otherwise the Boers and their sentiments. On the small gate was painted in large letters "Union Jack House," and though I never knew who lived in this aggressively British home, I admired the owner's pluck.

In estimating the Boer character, I think we are too apt to forget that the Boers are descendants of peasants, and while they have certainly lost the special virtue—cleanliness—of their Dutch peasant ancestors, in many ways the characteristics of their class have only been intensified. I am not, of course, speaking of the Dutch of Cape Town and its environs, where many of them are of very good descent. But among the up-country Boers, suspicion of strangers, "slimness"—which we call cunning—a sturdy determination to go their own way, and an absolute want of manners are the distinguishing traits that, in view of their ancestry, we need not be surprised to find. In many cases, however, education, and probably a mixture of French, English, or German blood have given a veneer of polish to some of the prominent Boers of the day, who are yet undeniably of peasant stock. These are the men who come to England, and it is well to remember that they are not representative of the ordinary up-country Boers of South Africa.

On one of my visits up-country in the Cape Colony, I saw a good deal of the Dutch farmers, as my host was particularly kind to them, and anxious to put aside all differences of opinion between them. Yet he was sorely tried by some of their methods of farming, for the diseased sheep allowed to run on their land infected his own, and he was put to endless trouble in having the burweed seeds that were blown over from the untended Dutchman's land rooted out. Of the amazing manners of these

Dutchmen I had an instance during this visit. One day, on entering the drawing-room, I found my hostess, a middle-aged English gentlewoman, entertaining a Dutchman, who was sprawling full length in an attitude of the greatest ease on the couch. His pipe was in his mouth, to add to the picture, though I knew that smoking was never allowed in the room. I was dreadfully laughed at afterwards for standing and looking what I thought of such an exhibition of manners. At least my looks were not lost on the culprit, for the man had the grace to pick himself up and look ashamed, the last thing, as I was told later, that he could have been expected to do. Any way, I declined to be sorry at the success of my impromptu lesson in manners, for I am sure it did that Boer good to know what was thought of him for once. It was impossible to think of an Englishman being tolerated who could behave in such a way, but the Dutchman was allowed to do as he liked, in order "to prevent ill feeling."

Funny things happen sometimes when calls are made at the Dutch houses. My brother-in-law was much disconcerted, when paying a state call on some German Boers, to feel a sudden upheaval under him as he took his seat. Then came a burst of angry cackles, as something dashed out and screamed itself away into the distance. The good wife of the house, in no way discomposed by the incident, explained affably that one of her hens always chose the particular chair selected by Tim for his own use, in which to lay her eggs!

On the other hand it was often dull work to go and see the Boers, and when I was with the friends of whom I have spoken already, we used often to ride over and call on their Dutch neighbours. One house I remember, that belonged to real "doppers," consisted apparently of one room,



though I conclude there must really have been more, as the family was a large one. Our reception was stolid, and while the Englishman who was with me began to chat pleasantly in Dutch, I had to explain in German that I knew nothing of the language. I then sat, a target for every eye in the room, except those of the man engaged in conversation with the Englishman, and every now and again a question as to my age, whether I was married, etc., was asked by one or the other, but without the slightest show of interest in the information given. We were entertained hospitably with very sweet coffee, but when I departed I must say that I felt visiting a typical Dutch household was very fatiguing work.

Another farm to which I was taken was very superior, and quite the grandest style of Dutch farmhouse. An English governess was established there, and, I much suspected, ruled the family with a rod of iron. The eldest son of the house offered me the use of his horse in the most English way, and the mistress entertained me for ages with an exact account of the marriage of some distant relative of her own with an Englishman. The lady made no secret of her pride over this English connection, and boasted openly of the presence of her English governess, and yet I felt sure that she and her family, in spite of their ambition to be thought to resemble us, really liked us less than did their more primitive neighbours.

Most of the up-country Dutch farmhouses present an untidy, ill-kept appearance. Not even a stoep separates many of them from the dusty open veld around; a small dam near the house provides water for the household, a native hut or two are scattered somewhere about, and a few wretched-looking fowls straggle round, while inside the house a large, dirty family exists, happy in its own way.

Work the Boers hate, and their wants being few, they do very little beyond squat on the land and try to get as far away from everyone else as possible. It is small wonder that they hate the energetic, enterprising English, who are always doing something. The piety of the Boers is unquestionable—at least in speech—though it does not appear to have much influence on their actions. I always used to say that by the way they talked they seemed to think they kept “the dear Lord” in their pockets. Of course they did not mean it so, but their conversation seemed to me to be equally irritating and impious.

Another strange thing about the Boers is the way they absorb other nationalities. The names of many Boer families show how frequently French Huguenots and subjects of other European nations have been mixed with the Dutch in the past, but in the process of time they become Dutch in all essential characteristics, only showing traces of their foreign ancestry in a few traits, such as higher intelligence, better manners, and occasionally better looks. The latter is shown more distinctly in the younger women, for the great majority of girls of purely Dutch descent I did not think at all pretty. Their big round faces, with dingy complexions, and their heavy figures did not appeal to my taste; but, on the other hand, I have never seen prettier girls anywhere than among those of mixed blood. I can think of many who are almost, if not quite, beautiful; tall and graceful in figure, with pale, clear skins and fine dark eyes, grey where Irish blood has been united with the Dutch, and brown where Danish ancestry is in question. I have also seen some decidedly pretty girls of mixed race who were quite fair. I did not notice the same difference in the looks of men of mixed blood, except that they are generally smaller in size than the “dopper,” and their faces are narrower. The

younger Dutchmen do not associate so much with the English as the Dutch girls do, and I fancy the former distrust their welcome, and are too self-conscious to be at ease.

The young Dutchman I have mentioned as being my travelling companion to Cape Town was certainly an exception, for no trace of self-consciousness damped his spirits or his pride in his own performances. I ought to have felt grateful to him, as he assisted the young Englishman nobly in delivering me from a most undesirable travelling companion. At one place at which we stopped on the way down both my companions got out, and while I was sitting alone I heard an altercation arise in the outside corridor. A stalwart Kafir was engaged in sweeping out the dust, when I heard a thick English voice, that told me the owner thereof was decidedly squiffy, remonstrating with him. "No, boss," came the answer, "no bosses allowed here, only missis!" and the broom was used triumphantly to prevent the Englishman pushing past and getting into my carriage, as he had clearly made up his mind to do. More and more heated grew the discussion, but the Kafir, who was perfectly civil, was equal to the occasion until, his work being finished, he departed, and only the return of my companions prevented the obnoxious stranger from coming in. He charged alternately from the platform and from the corridor, until at last the two men lost patience, for as the Dutchman remarked sententiously, "They could not fight in the presence of a lady." They made a sortie from the carriage, and as our train had been divided and we were in the latter part, they seized the drunken Englishman, and rushing down the platform just as the front train was starting, flung open the door of the guard's van and shot him in. This was a most effectual way of disposing of him, for only the guard's voice, raised

in angry protest, could be heard as the train glided out of the station.

While my sister was at Johannesburg she was turning over plans for a waggon trip up-country. This she carried out eventually in Zululand, but at first she was attracted to Rhodesia, and as a trip was being advertised to Salisbury, she went to interview the agent about the matter. The man was fully prepared to take advantage of the little knowledge she then had of the country, and gave a rosy-hued description of the prospects of the expedition. He even gave a promise that a bath should be forthcoming every day. Great was my cousin's wrath when he heard of it. "As if he could guarantee a *bath*," he exclaimed scornfully. "Why, you are much more likely to have no water to drink." As this happened just after the first Matabele war (1893) there was no railway, and the country was in a most unsettled state. Naturally, when my sister knew of the real conditions, she thought no more of the waggon trip.

I was very disappointed not to be able to go to Pretoria, which is not quite thirty miles by rail from Johannesburg. Maggie, however, went there, and as my cousins were not able to accompany her, she started alone. Pretoria, the prettiest village in South Africa, as Rider Haggard calls it, lies in a hollow, surrounded by range upon range of hills. The scenery is beautiful, and very different to the endless swelling stretches of veld that weary one with their level monotony in other parts of the Transvaal. My sister arrived quite early in the day, and before she left the station she proceeded to arrange her toilette in the little waiting-room. Here, as she put her hat straight, shook out her skirts and tidied up generally, the station-master stood almost at her elbow and watched her proceedings. Not a word did he say, only stared stolidly,



so perhaps he was taking notes and studying the ways of the English.

Two cousins of ours who were in Pretoria at the time were most anxious that my sister should see everything of interest in the place, and a Presbyterian minister and his wife, whom we had met, were also most kind, and gave her some introductions to people in Natal and Zululand that made her subsequent visits to both those countries so pleasant. With Pretoria my sister was charmed ; the shady trees gave such a delightful sense of coolness, and the pink rose hedges were a delight to the eyes. There was much that was of sad interest, too, in the place, and she visited the convent where some of our soldiers were stationed during the hundred days' siege in the first Boer war. The nuns who had gone through the siege were still there, and they told her tales of that sad time, and how during the weary days of the siege the Reverend Mother lay dying. They gave a noble tribute to the conduct of our soldiers, who, without anyone having suggested it to them, always took off their boots before passing the sick woman's door, and were careful not to make a sound in the house to disturb her.

But, oh ! what stories the very stones could tell of the wrath and horror that overwhelmed our fellow-country people when news came of the shameful peace that had been made. An eye-witness wrote of it : " The scene which ensued baffled description. The men hoisted the colours half-mast high, the Union Jack was pulled down and dragged through the mud, and the distinctive ribbons worn round the hats of the men as badges were pulled off and trampled underfoot. I saw men crying like children with shame and despair. Some went raving up and down that they were Englishmen no longer ; others, with flushed and indignant faces, sat contemplating their impending

ruin, 'refusing to be comforted.' It was a . . . distressing and humiliating scene, and such as I hope never to witness again. While I write, the remembrance of it comes vividly before me, and as I recall . . . the despairing farmers and storekeepers, half-crazy with the sense of wounded honour and the prospect of loss and ruin before them, my blood boils, and I cannot trust myself to commit to paper what I think. The lapse of two years has but deepened the feelings which I then experienced. The subject may, perhaps, be only unpleasant to people at home, but to one who has seen the ruin and dismay brought upon the too-credulous loyalists, the recollections it stirs up are more bitterly mortifying than words can describe."

It was no wonder that, as Carter in his "narrative of the Boer war" quotes from the "News of the Camp," "curses both loud and deep were heard on every side, and strong men, whose feet never hesitated, or whose pulse wavered when the word 'forward!' sounded in their ears, were seen to shed tears on learning the intelligence, deemed at once so disappointing and humiliating. . . . This feeling seemed to grow as the day wore on, and evening saw something very like a demonstration from the mounted Volunteers, who burned an effigy of the Prime Minister of England, scattering his well-petroleumed carcase to the winds."

And how much more have I not heard from those who suffered for England's misguided policy. If only I could express the bitterness of feeling that speaks from every letter I receive from men who have worked and fought for their country, and who are now being betrayed as surely as those fellow-countrymen of ours were betrayed nearly thirty years ago. By handing over our countrymen, as we are now doing again, in spite of such a lesson as we have

had, we are bringing the same humiliation, the same misery upon them as our loyalists suffered in 1881.

The curious phlegmatic Boer blood showed itself strongly in a half-Dutch, half-English girl whom my sister met at Mrs. Gilfillan's house at Pretoria. She was amused and interested in her stolid way at Maggie's enthusiasm, and remarked in a slow, deliberate manner when the war was being discussed: "Well, if there is another war, I really do not know which side I shall take. I have not made up my mind." The girl did her best though to help my sister in her search for places of interest, and hoped that she had noticed the Swartkop on her way up in the train, where, as she remarked affably, "your men had one of their very few successes." She also pointed out Jess's cottage, "The Palatial," the pretty little place where Rider Haggard lived when he was secretary to Sir Theophilus Shepstone during the latter's administration of the Transvaal.

Maggie saw President Kruger's house with its lions on guard, of course, but she did not pay him a visit, though some of her friends were very anxious for her to do so. The old man was always at home to visitors at a certain time in the afternoon, and afterwards she was rather sorry that she had not made the acquaintance of him and his vrow. The Cape cart in which she was driven about the town had quite an interesting native driver. The man, who spoke English, told her that he had been Selous' driver, and remarked with wistful confidence that he knew his old master would come back. "They tell me my baas has married and settled down in England, but I can't believe it. He will never stay quiet, he will come back to his wild life again out here."

My sister's last and saddest visit was to the cemetery where, in the neglected, overgrown little portion devoted

to the English, she found the simple headstone that marks Captain Elliott's grave. The story of his unavenged death is one at which every English man and woman should shudder. It is but another story of our shame, of which there are so many in connection with our rule in South Africa. The tale is an old one, and by many is forgotten, but there is a tragic ring of horror in the report of the details of the crime, made by Captain Lambart, of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, to Sir George Colley.

Captain Lambart was returning from the Orange Free State, on December 18, in the year 1880, where he had been on duty buying horses for Commandant Ferreira's men for the Basuto war, also remounts for the Royal Artillery, and for his own troop of Mounted Infantry. When about thirty miles from Pretoria, on the road from Heidelberg, he was suddenly surrounded and taken prisoner by a party of some twenty or thirty Boers, who captured the horses and took them and Captain Lambart back to Heidelberg. There he was joined about a week later by Captain and Paymaster Elliott, of the 94th Regiment, and some prisoners of war of the same regiment. Captain Elliott was the only officer of the 94th who had escaped unwounded from the Bronkhurst Spruit engagement, in which his regiment had been involved. On the day following the arrival of the batch of prisoners, the two officers received a written communication from the Secretary to the Republican Government to the effect that the members of the said Government would call on them that day. The purport of the interview was that at a meeting of council it had been decided to give the prisoners the choice of two alternatives: "(1) To remain prisoners of war during hostilities in the Transvaal; (2) To be released on *parole d'honneur* to leave the Transvaal at once, cross into the Free State under escort, and not bear



arms against the Republican Government during the war."

On this Captain Lambart remarks: "Time being given us for deliberation, Captain Elliott and I decided to accept No. 2 alternative, and communicated the same to the Secretary to the South African Republic, who informed us, in the presence of the Commandant-General P. Joubert, that we could leave next day, taking with us all our private property."

The two days following, however, being Christmas Day and Sunday, the Englishmen were informed that they could not start till Monday, on which day, after the necessary papers had been signed, a duplicate of that containing the conditions agreed on was given to them, together with a free pass signed by the Commandant-General. The soldiers who had been taken prisoners were to be released on the same conditions as the two officers, and the latter naturally asked to be allowed to take charge of them when they started. This was refused, but the Republican Government promised that waggons, food and money should be supplied to the men to take them down country.

An escort of two men was sent to conduct Captain Lambart and Captain Elliott to the nearest drift over the Vaal river, a distance of about twenty-five miles from Heidelberg, where P. Joubert himself told them they would find a punt. Passing through the Boer camp and the town, the start was made about 1 p.m., but as Captain Lambart knew the district well, having been "look-out" officer in the Transvaal, he soon noticed that they were not going in the right direction. The escort, however, maintained that they were taking the right road, but at nightfall, when the order to outspan was given, they were nowhere near the drift. Inspanning at daybreak another start was made, and after driving across country

for some hours, Captain Lambart at last declined to go further, and said that he and his companion would wait while the escort looked for the drift. The latter soon returned, saying that they had found it, but when at last they came in sight of the Vaal, the Englishmen found that they were at the point where the Vaal and Klip rivers join, and that the former was impassable. The objection was naturally made that the punt the General had said they were to cross by was not there, and that it was impossible to get the carriage and horses across. To this the escort replied that it was to Pretorius' Punt that the General had ordered them to go, and that the prisoners must leave the carriage and horses and swim across. Captain Lambart asked to see the written instructions, which were given him, written in Dutch. He said that the name of Pretorius was not mentioned, and that the escort must either take him and his companion back to the Boer camp or to the proper drift. The party consequently turned back, and shortly afterwards the escort disappeared.

Not knowing where they were, Captain Lambart proposed that they should go along the banks of the river Vaal till they reached the proper punt. After travelling all that day, and till midday on Wednesday, the travellers, who found themselves about twenty-five miles from Spencer's punt, were stopped by two armed Boers, who handed them an official letter. "This," Captain Lambart says, "we found to be from the Secretary to the Republican Government, stating that the members were surprised that, as officers and gentlemen we had broken our *parole d'honneur*, and refused to leave the Transvaal; that if we did not do so immediately by the nearest drift, which the bearers would show us, we must return as prisoners of war; that as through our ignorance of the

language of the country there might be some misunderstanding, they were loth to think we had willingly broken our promise."

The Englishmen said that they would reply to the letter and explain matters, and in the meantime they were ready to follow their new escort. They were first conducted to a farmhouse, where they were told to wait while the Dutchmen fetched their Commandant. It was 6 o'clock before the latter arrived, and he, after repeating the complaints already made in the official letter, ordered them to start at once for the drift. As by this time it was getting dark, the Englishmen asked to be allowed to wait till the following morning, but were told that they must start at once to Spencer's Punt, the nearest crossing to the place where they were. The escort set out in the wrong direction for the drift, but to the consequent expostulation replied that there was another drift close at hand. When they reached the drift, however, the Dutchmen refused to stop, and obliged the Englishmen to go on. The escort soon after was increased from two to eight men, and they then wheeled sharp down to the river and told the Englishmen that they must cross there.

The night was now of inky darkness only relieved by flashes of vivid lightning. The officers objected that to cross a strange river, the waters of which were roaring past them, was impossible. They were only told that they must cross without delay. The horses were consequently driven down into the rushing water and fell immediately. They were lifted, and a few yards further fell into a hole. Once more they were extricated, but then stuck hopelessly against a rock. The current was so strong that the cart was overturned, and Captain Lambart called to the waiting Dutchmen either to lend assistance or to let them return. The only reply vouchsafed was

that if they came back they would be shot. Finding it impossible to move the horses, the two men determined to try and save their own lives by swimming to the far bank.

Before they could put their plan into execution a volley from only some fifteen yards off was fired into them. The bullets came through the tent of the cart, from which the men were about to spring, and one of them hit Captain Elliott, who, uttering an exclamation, fell headlong into the river. Captain Lambart sprang after him, but was swept down under the current for some distance, and when he came to the surface he could see nothing of his companion. Again and again he called his name, but received no reply, and another volley was fired at him, striking the water all round him, but without hitting him. Feeling the hopelessness of further search, Captain Lambart struck out for the opposite bank, and after much difficulty reached the bank under a heavy fire, the Dutchmen being able to follow his movements by the constant play of the lightning.

Getting at last out of danger, but without the least idea of his whereabouts, Captain Lambart walked all through that night of rain, and a bitterly cold wind, until the next day he reached a store kept by an Englishman. He had tasted no food since the previous day at sunrise, he was without coat or hat, his boots were worn through, and at each Dutch farm he had passed he had been refused even a glass of water. By the kindly offices of the English storekeeper he at length reached Heilbron, where he took the post cart to Maritzburg. The soldiers in the meantime had been taken to Spencer's Punt, and there turned loose, without any of the necessary provisions for their journey that had been promised. They had the good fortune to come across an English transport rider, by



whose help the party, consisting of one sergeant and sixty-one men, "all that remained of the Leydenburg detachment and headquarters of the 94th Regiment," as Captain Lambart mentioned in his report, managed to get to Maritzburg.

Long after her visit to Pretoria my sister met an Englishwoman, who was a refugee from the Transvaal during the second Boer war. The latter told her that she knew the two Boers who played the chief part in that Vaal river tragedy, and that they were still boasting of their crime, and hoping to get more English into their power in the war that was then raging.

And for such conduct, a disgrace to the name of civilisation, no punishment has ever been meted out at the hands of man. Was it surprising that by that unavenged grave in the Pretoria cemetery my sister knelt and prayed that God's vengeance might fall on the murderers of our countrymen?

## CHAPTER VI

### ACROSS THE BORDER

It was in May, 1894, that my sister left Johannesburg with the intention of visiting Zululand. She went by way of Natal, and in those days the railway had not been made beyond Verulam. Coaches drawn by ten horses or mules ran from that point. The teams were changed every ten miles, and the animals always went at a gallop whenever the ground was practicable. Road there was none in the home sense of the word. Just a track over the veld, and as the old track wore into holes, the drivers would go outside it, till the so-called road was half a mile or more in width, and in places coaches could pass each other without the occupants of one knowing of the presence of the other.

Two men were responsible for the driving, one of whom held the reins. These were only attached to bits on the leaders and wheelers, the six intervening horses being free, except that the reins were passed through terets. The real driver, however, was the man with the whip, the lash of which was long enough to touch the leaders easily. Most, if not all of the guidance, was done with the whip. When I went up about eighteen months later, the railway then being open to Standerton, our coach had to cross a piece of the railway track that had just been laid down. The horses, I was told, had never been over before, and as I was on the box-seat I had the full benefit of the small excitement at the crossing.

We approached the incline of the railroad at a hand

gallop, and as we got near, a man dropped from the coach and flew to the leaders' heads. How he managed to get there at the pace we were going was my wonder. By sheer strength he held their heads straight, the whip flew out, and the leaders, wild with fright, tore up the ascent and over the strange new obstacle. They had tried to check, but the pressure of the eight horses behind them, and the taste of that awful whip, whose cracks were like revolver shots, forced them over. Soon after this episode one of our wheels was discovered to be on fire. There was no use in stopping before the next stage was reached, for not a drop of water was to be had. I amused myself by watching the smouldering wheel and speculating whether it would, or would not, burst into flames, before we had any chance of putting it out. Also, what would happen if the women and children packed inside the coach, discovered that they were travelling over a volcano that might burst out at any moment. A nice predicament we should have been in had this happened, left coachless on the open veld, with nothing to get us on to the next stopping place but the saddleless horses! Happily for us, it was not till we pulled up that the fire burst out, and with water at hand it was soon quenched.

To return to my sister's experiences. In May the winter season had begun, and the veld might be expected to be hard and dry. But when Maggie started from Johannesburg, very heavy late rains had fallen, and the ground was in a terrible state. All went fairly well at first, as frost had hardened the ground near Johannesburg. Further on the difficulties were great, and the horses could hardly drag the coach along at a crawl. The first night passed off fairly comfortably, as beside my sister there was only one other passenger. The coach, by the way, had a sort of old-fashioned mail-coach body, swung

high on great leather straps instead of springs. In this four people could be carried comfortably, and six at a severe pinch.

The second night was truly unpleasant. At Standerton five men whose fruit cart could not possibly be dragged further were taken up. The cold prevented anyone from going outside, and the crush was terrible. All the five men had violent colds, which did not add to the pleasantness of the situation, and they made up seven passengers inside! When at last Maggie reached Charlestown, after three days and two nights travelling, she was in a state of utter exhaustion. Owing to the delays caused by the bad going, she had missed the one train by which she could get on, and when she went to the principal hotel, it was only to find it full up. Charlestown was crowded with men at work upon the railroad, and they were sleeping in every hole and corner of the two hotels, even on and under the billiard-table boasted by one of them. Night had come on, and the only suggestion made for some time was that Maggie should share a small room with "some other ladies." She responded promptly that she would prefer the veld—it was freezing hard. Then in despair the landlord appealed to a townsman, and he hearing Maggie's name, asked if she was related to Sir Richard Southey. Indeed she was, poor, tired, frozen Maggie responded, and she only wished she was back in his comfortable house at Wynberg, which she had not long left. The townsman at once took charge of her, saying that he had been at Kimberley while Uncle Richard was Governor there, and would be delighted to do anything he could for one of his family. The man had only one bedroom in the house—his own—but he gave it up cheerfully to Maggie, and she tumbled into bed, thankful for warmth and shelter at last.



Next morning she felt revived, and as she had been forced to break her journey, she determined if possible to stay one more night at Charlestown, and visit Majuba during the day. Her best way was to go to Laings Nek Station by the one train that left at 2 p.m. The difficulty was about returning, as there was no train, and she would have to walk the six miles from the hill to Charlestown. She could not, of course, think of turning her host out of his room for a second night, so she consulted the station master about accommodation, and he most civilly offered the use of the station waiting-room, as it was evident no quarters were to be had in the little town. This offer my sister accepted gratefully.

When she was on the point of starting by the 2 o'clock train, the station master begged to be allowed to escort her, urging that it was most unsafe for a young lady, unused to the country, to explore Majuba alone. It would be dark before she could get back, and it would never do for her to have such a walk by herself. As she felt it would be ungracious to refuse, the kindly escort was accepted, and in the end Maggie was glad she had done so. The country was most wild, and in places on the mountain the snow lay deep in the drifts, making it even more difficult than usual to find the path. It would certainly have been dangerous for any stranger to wander about alone, especially after dark. Furthermore, the station master proved a most interesting companion, for he knew every foot of the ground, and showed her every point of interest on the ill-fated Majuba. They went right up the mountain, no slight climb, for as a Tommy who had been in the fight said graphically, "It took us four hours to climb up, but we only touched the blooming hill about four times coming down." There, on the rough hill-top, they saw the little cairn of stone that marks the spot where General

Colley fell, that brave English gentleman who paid for his mistakes with his life.

I wonder whether in all history any place has brought so much bitterness into men's lives as that accursed Majuba. How well I remember when I saw it from the train on my way to Johannesburg. All the passengers stood out in the corridor gazing silently forward, as our train toiled slowly up the pass. Then a railway official said softly to me: "That is Majuba." Except for a hurried "Thanks," I could not have broken the curious hush that had fallen on everyone. One had to visit South Africa and see the under-currents of feeling during the years between the first and second Boer Wars, to understand the misery and humiliation our fellow countrymen suffered from that battle and the shameful peace that followed. O'Neil's farm, where the peace was signed, was also pointed out to me, and when she was last in South Africa, Maggie saw O'Neil, a rough-looking man, who was married to a Dutchwoman and had become a regular Boer. Maggie was told that after the first Boer War, English feeling was so strong against O'Neil, that he was shunned by everyone about him.

On her return from her expedition my sister found that the waiting-room had been fitted up into quite a comfortable bedroom for her. Blankets were nailed up to the windows for curtains, and two huge railway lamps gave warmth and light, making the place look quite cosy.

The object of my sister's projected visit to Zululand was to go to the battlefields in the country, her ardent wish to see them having been fired by the reading of Rider Haggard's romances before she left England. In those days there were no post-carts, much less railways, in Zululand, and with the exception of a magistracy and a small detachment of troops at Eshowe, and a few other scattered

magistracies, there were very few whites there. The natives, sixteen years after the Zulu War, still retained many of their old characteristics, unspoiled by contact with a white people, which contact unfortunately has usually such a deteriorating effect upon them.

She had been given a letter of introduction to Mr. (now Sir Charles) Saunders, the resident magistrate of Eshowe, and when she started from Johannesburg her idea was to go direct to Durban, and on to Eshowe by way of Verulam. The obliging station master of Charlestown, however, advised her to stop at Glencoe Junction, and from there branch off to Dundee. From the latter place Rorke's Drift and Isandhlwana could be reached easily, while it would mean a long journey across Zululand to get to them from Eshowe. The suggestion being accepted, a wire was sent to the landlord of the Royal Hotel, Dundee, to reserve a room, and for a conveyance to meet her at Glencoe. At that time the branch line to Dundee was only used properly for carrying coals from the Dundee coal-fields to Glencoe Junction, but a carriage for the use of passengers was often attached to the coal trains. When Maggie arrived at the Junction she found the landlord of the Royal Hotel, Mr. Quested, waiting with a carriage for her, and he entered with interest into her plans, promising to do all he could to further them.

That evening a sad damper fell upon the traveller's visions of Zululand. A Natal policeman, while talking in the bar of the hotel, gave the landlord the news that small-pox had broken out in Zululand, quarantine had been established, and the drifts were closed. Mounted police were watching all along the Buffalo, which river with the Tugela forms the boundary between Natal and Zululand, and no was to be allowed to cross from either side.

This seemed a complete crusher, but Quested suggested

that at all events a visit to Rorke's Drift could be made, as that is on the Natal side of the Buffalo. So on the following day Maggie set off, driven by her landlord, for Rorke's Drift, which is about thirty or forty miles from Dundee. It was a pretty wild drive, but beyond the usual breakages of harness, difficulties in crossing rivers, and so on, they had no adventures, and arrived safely at the Swedish Mission at the Drift. There the missionary made them most welcome, and after giving them a good meal, conducted Maggie to an outside room, where she established herself for the night, thinking, poor deluded soul, to find rest after her long jolting.

First she tried to lock her door, her driver having given her a hint that she would be wise to do so. The advice, however, she found she could not act on, as there was no key. Too tired to take the trouble to remedy the deficiency, she was making her preparations for the night hurriedly, when, to her horror, she discovered on the wall facing her a large tarantula. Unluckily, a cousin at the Cape had shown her one recently, so that she could not persuade herself fondly that it was only an ordinary unobjectionable spider. As her room was some way from the mission house, she could not wander about a strange place in the dark, hunting for someone to eject her undesirable visitor. She felt it quite beyond her to attack it herself. So she stood and gazed at the creature, in all its loathly ugliness, and it apparently gazed back at her. At last the position became intolerable. Summoning all her courage, she flew to the candle, blew it out and sprang into bed, trusting to finding safety under the bedclothes. The enemy apparently was content with its triumph. It was seen no more, and the night passed in peace.

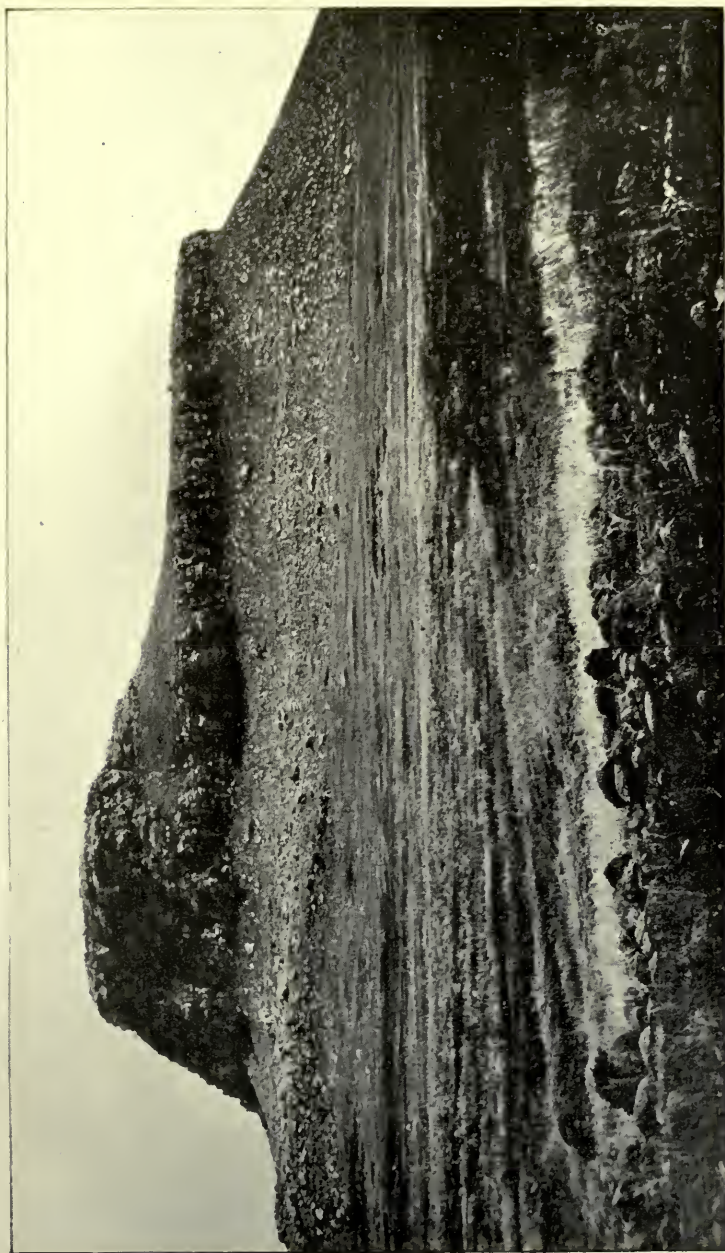
Early the next morning Quested came to her door with the good news that she could get through into Zululand



after all. Some troopers of the Natal Police Force, who were guarding the drifts over the Buffalo, had heard of her wish to visit Isandhlwana, and they had come in to say that if she liked to cross, they would look another way! So Maggie made her preparations for her further journey gaily.

Before starting, though, she went over the historic ground of Rorke's Drift, and was shown what little still remained to speak of the terrible struggle that had taken place there on the night of January 22, 1879. Fire had destroyed most of the old buildings, but the missionary pointed out a piece of the old wall still standing as at the time of the siege. I wonder whether this was part of the wall of the cattle kraal, where some of the Natal police troopers slept the night after the struggle. They had come in with Lord Chelmsford and his force, and after sleeping peacefully in the kraal for two nights, they discovered that their bed of forage had hidden the dead bodies of seven Zulus, upon which they had reposed most comfortably.

The Swedish Mission House stands on the spot defended by our men, and close to it are the graves of those who fell. Those brave men whose heroic defence of their weak post saved Natal from invasion, for though Cetewayo's order had something to do with our preservation, it would have been of no avail in holding back the two regiments of his brother Dabulamanzi (Conqueror of the Waters) had they been successful at the Drift. This Impi, numbering some 3,000 odd men, had been held in reserve during the battle of Isandhlwana, and, inspired by their comrades' triumph, were mad to wet their assegais. Had they passed the frail barrier of Rorke's Drift, there is little doubt but they would have swept on in spite of Cetewayo's order, and devastated Natal in a storm of fire and blood.



ISANDHLWANA HILL.

*To face p. 122.*



A well-known Zululand magistrate told Maggie that after the war, when he was talking to an important Zulu, one of the royal blood, the chief asked him :

“What reward did the White Queen give to the Inkoses Chard and Bromhead? It was they who saved Natal.”

“But,” the magistrate added, “that was not quite fair to Cetewayo, whose word was always that there should be no invasion of English territory.”

Cetewayo was a shrewd man, as after-events proved, and knowing that his cause was doomed in the end, he was consistently against any injury being done to Natal.

Then came the start into Zululand. As the Buffalo could not be crossed by the ordinary ferry, owing to the recent order, Maggie had to go over in a little flat-bottomed boat, that stuck on a sand bank, in full view of the Natal police tents that were dotted picturesquely along the river bank. True to their word, however, no trooper appeared, and the cart having been sent round by a drift a little way off, she was free to continue her journey. At the first halt at Barklie's Store and hotel, she bought a bottle of whisky and sent it back to the gallant police troopers, with her warmest thanks for their welcome effacement. Then she went on about nine miles to Isandhlwana, stopping at Blick's Store, a tin and iron shanty standing near a little drift at a short distance from the scene of the battle.

It is difficult indeed to speak of Isandhlwana, the great Lion Rock, that stands for ever a memorial over our dead. There is, to the best of my belief, no bitterness now between Briton and Zulu over the war. The Zulus say that we and they were two brave nations, who fought our quarrel out. Both sides played the game for all they were worth, and the British won. The Zulus are a high caste



people, very different to the other natives of South Africa, at least so long as they are unspoiled by contact with whites, as they too often are at the present time, and they show no grudge for our having proved ourselves the stronger. Still, the thought of the awful catastrophe of Isandhlwana stirs the blood of a white woman, especially as I am writing on the anniversary of that terrible January 22. Oh! those poor boys of ours, who had even taken their cricketing things with them, and regarded the invasion of Zululand as a kind of glorified picnic.

I remember that when living near Maritzburg, I happened to go into our drawing-room, where our native house-boy, Tom, was dusting an assegai fastened to the wall.

"'Sandhlwane Inkoza, 'Sandhlwane," remarked Tom, with a grin of joy, as though Isandhlwana was the biggest joke in the world.

The odd thing was that the assegai *had* been used at Isandhlwana, though how Tom knew it I cannot tell.

Of the few men who escaped from that scene of slaughter I have only seen one. This was an old man who had been in the Colonial Volunteer Force, and who had never been quite right in his head since the horrors of that day. My sister knew another survivor, at Eshowe, a Mr. Barker. When she first met him, she was told that he objected strongly to speaking of Isandhlwana, but later he explained to her that he did not mind talking about it quietly to those who were really interested, but that he could not make "an after-dinner tale" out of such horrors. Mr. Barker belonged to the Natal Carbineers, and being mounted, he got away safely from the camp and reached the Buffalo. He remembered having seen Lieutenants Coghill and Melville near him as he came to the bank.

As he was going down into the river he heard an

agonised cry of: "For God's sake let me get up on your horse. I am done," from a man on foot who had managed somehow to get so far and was completely exhausted. It was impossible to put a double burden on the horse in the state in which he was after his terrible ride, but his rider stopped, jumped down, and helped the trooper up in his place. Then, holding on to the stirrup, he plunged into the river and got across the drift with the man who owed his life to him. They both got away, for happily the Zulus did not carry the pursuit far on the Natal side, indeed they went very little further than the river. "I do not believe I should have done it, only I thought it was one of our own fellows" (the Natal Carbineers), remarked Mr. Barker when he told Maggie the story, but no doubt he would have done so, and one of the Eshowe officials was right when he said: "If ever a man deserved the V.C., that man did."

When Maggie went over Isandhlwana, she visited the many graves that lay scattered over the veld. Only a few monuments had been erected, and surely, as she thought, that was right. The Rock itself was the grandest monument over our dead. But many cairns had been built up to mark the graves, and at a distance from most of them a picturesque cross of stone, in memory of Captain George Shepstone, marks the spot where he fell. Captain Shepstone, son of Sir T. Shepstone, was on Colonel Durnford's staff, and when he saw all was hopeless, rode off by the Nek towards Fugitives' Drift. When almost in safety he turned back, exclaiming to a man near him, "I cannot leave Durnford." His attempt to reach his chief was, however, unsuccessful, and his body was found at some distance from those of the gallant little band who had met death on the Nek. It lay among great rocks, where he had stood at bay and sold his life dearly.

One half-comic, half-pathetic victim of the battle was a native chief, Gabangaye, who with his men—all Zulu refugees—fought on our side. Gabangaye was mounted and could have escaped, but he was so frightened that, being elderly and very fat, he could not stick on his horse. He tumbled off incontinently as fast as his loyal followers, who never dreamed of leaving him, put him up. At last the poor old man sat down on a rock and refused to move, and he was assagaied as he sat.

Not the least sad incident of that sad day was the death of the Natal Police orderly who was bringing the mails out to the camp. The poor fellow was found lying dead on the way from Rorke's Drift, the bag of mails still lying beside him, with many belated Christmas packets for those whose end had come on the 22nd. The man had heard the firing when not far from the Buffalo, and hurried on to join in the fight.

Away, round the hill, Maggie was shown the Memorial Chapel that had been put up to our soldiers. Fortunately it was not built in a conspicuous place, and so did not mar the lonely grandeur of the scene. Under the altar lie buried all the bones that for long after the burial parties had done their work were found continually scattered over the veld. Long after the fight, a white man's head, wrapped in a blanket, was found among the rocks by some visitors, and the history of the severed head was never known. Months later Colonel Mansel was sent to Isandhlwana to report upon the best method of disposing of the bodies. He was also in command of the burial party, and he camped out upon the field for several days.

While at the Cape, we knew the military chaplain to whom had fallen the terrible duty of breaking the news of their husbands' deaths to the wives of the men of the 24th. When I was talking to him, I used sometimes

to wonder how he had survived the ordeal. The soldiers' wives and children had been left at King William's Town, where the 24th was stationed before the regiment was ordered to Natal. It was at "King" that the Kafirs had news of the disaster at Isandhlwana before it was wired through from Natal, one of the many instances of the marvellous means of rapid communication possessed by the natives. One friend of ours himself broke the news of their loss to the widows of two of his own men who fell at Isandhlwana. Curiously enough the grief of one woman at her loss seemed to be swallowed up in the fierce anger that possessed her that her husband's body should have been left unburied. She reproached the unfortunate officer bitterly for the neglect, nor could she be made to see that it was impossible to take thought for the burial of our men until we could protect the burying parties from sharing the fate of their dead comrades.

Before I leave the sad story of our grievous reverse at Isandhlwana, I must say that the name Isandhlwana does not mean the "Hill of the Little Hand," as is generally supposed. The word means part of the interior of an ox—a less romantic translation, but oxen are much more important to a Zulu than any "Little Hand," and they believe that the formation of the hill resembles the thing after which they have named it. There is, however, only the difference of one letter between Isandhlwana and the word that does mean "Hill of the Little Hand," so that the general mistake is not surprising.



## CHAPTER VII

### ALONE WITH THE ZULUS

AFTER my sister's visit to Isandhlwana, she went down for a few days to Durban, for she found it would take a little time to settle the preliminaries of her ox waggon journey. As she thought of making a start from Eshowe, she sent her letter of introduction to Mr. Saunders, the Resident Magistrate at that place, and explained her wishes. He kindly sent her full instructions about going up; indeed, he and Mrs. Saunders most thoughtfully arranged everything for her, and only regretted not being able to ask her to stay with them at the Magistracy, owing to the very severe illness of a friend who was with them at the time.

As the military cart that ran between Eshowe camp and Verulam was not going up just then, Maggie started on her way by train, the little coast-line as she left Durban running through sub-tropical scenery. The luxuriant vegetation, with tea, coffee, and sugar plantations covered the country as far as Verulam, the railway terminus. From Verulam she went by post-cart, drawn by six horses, as far as the Lower Tugela. This little stopping place boasts an hotel, about which there is a tradition in connection with its scarcity of bath-rooms. It is said that one gallant soldier, being desperate at the loss of his morning tub, was reduced to taking it on the veranda under cover of an umbrella!

The journey on from the Lower Tugela was very wild. No post-cart ran through Zululand, so Maggie had a conveyance to herself. The cart was so tiny that there

was only room for her and the half-caste driver on the seat, while the Zulu whose duty it was to help with the horses, squatted on her toes. Four half-broken horses were harnessed in weird fashion to the cart, and her trunk was strapped on behind. At a stopping place, known as "Lamb's," my sister, feeling disinclined to move, said that she would remain in the cart while the horses were changed. There was no remonstrance or warning from the men about her doing so, but the moment the wheelers were freed, there was an awful crash, and one of the horse's heels came right through the splashboard, only just missing her legs as she sat in the cramped little conveyance. It seemed that the peculiar harness included a kicking-strap, and as soon as it was loosened, the horse was prompt to make use of his recovered liberty. She never felt inclined to repeat the experiment.

During the day Maggie amused herself by talking with the native, as he was the first true Zulu that she had seen. The only means of communication was through the driver, who acted as interpreter. She questioned the man about the war, and at last said: "Well, I suppose if war broke out now, you would kill me." "Hah! No, Inkozikas, not you," was the answer, "I should kill all the other whites, but I should remember you were the lady who gave me the cigarettes." Thus with true Zulu courtesy exempting Maggie from his contemplated massacre. The interpreter, however, after giving the speech in English, added with a grin: "Of course, that a lie. He would stab you and all belonging to you if once he saw red."

On her arrival at Eshowe, from which place she hoped to start on her waggon-trip, she had a very pleasant time, as every one called on her and did their best to amuse her. But all were strongly opposed to the idea of her projected

trip, as they were agreed it was most unsafe for a girl to travel alone through the country. Mr. Saunders and Sir Marshall Clarke were equally against it, and as Maggie soon saw that she could not possibly carry out her plan from Eshowe under the circumstances, she wisely gave up the idea for the time being, and turned her attention to what could be done from the place.

With the help of some of her new friends, an expedition to visit John Dunn was arranged. It may be remembered that Dunn was Cetewayo's right-hand man for many years before the Zulu War. When war broke out the white man had to stand by his own people, and he did good service on our side against his Zulu friend. After the war was over he was made chief over a district in Zululand, but it was not such a large one as he had ruled over formerly under Cetewayo.

A trader named White engaged to drive Maggie to a store of his own near the coast, where there was one of John Dunn's houses, at which Dunn was known to be staying just then. Accordingly White drove her first to his own home, where his wife looked after her for the night, and the following day took her on to his little branch store on the coast. On the way they turned aside for a few miles to visit Ginginlova, where Lord Chelmsford had a hard struggle to drive back the Zulus when he was on his way to relieve Colonel Pearson. The latter was then shut up at Eshowe, and his troops were to go on with Lord Chelmsford's force in the final march on Ulundi. Dunn and the natives under his command fought manfully on our side in the engagement at Ginginlova.

When Dunn heard that an English lady wished to see him, he was a little doubtful about receiving her. However, he consented to do so, and he told Maggie later that he had suffered a good deal, when the Zulu war was just

over, from energetic ladies who insisted upon interviewing him. He did all he could to entertain my sister, and spoke freely about the war and his life with Cetewayo. He told her how deeply he had felt deserting his Zulu friends; when war being decided on, Lord Chelmsford told him he must make his choice between black and white. He went to Cetewayo and laid the case before him, and told him that he felt he must go back to his own people. The Zulu king told him that he was right, but it was a sad parting, as the two men had been friends for years.

Maggie spent several days on the coast, amusing herself by walking and fishing on the lagoon with John Dunn. During their walks she was often not a little amused at passing small whity-brown urchins, tumbling about on the sand. Not very surprising, it is true, as Dunn lived in native fashion, but he ignored the babies completely, looking casually at them as though he rather wondered whose picaninnies they could be. He was very proud of the conduct of his native contingent at Ginginlova, and declared that it was they and the Naval Brigade who had won the day for the English.

During her visit, a Zulu girl, one of Dunn's people, came in to have some wounds dressed that had been inflicted by a crocodile. The girl's story was a truly extraordinary one. She and a companion, she said, had gone down to a small river, about two miles from Dunn's house, to fetch water. One of the girls was seized by a crocodile, and the other, picking up a stick as she ran, went pluckily to her assistance. She belaboured the crocodile so furiously with her slight weapon, that the creature actually released his victim and went for her. The first girl, in spite of her wounds, now flew to the assistance of her friend, and between them the crocodile was driven away. Neither of



the girls was seriously hurt and the one who related the story refused to take back a word of the narrative.

Before Maggie's stay was over rain came on, and as White's shanty where she was staying had only a mud floor, her discomfort was great. The only real house in the neighbourhood was Dunn's, and though he would have put this at the visitor's disposal most courteously, it was being done up, and was at the time quite unfit for her use. Between the mud floor and fishing on the lagoon in the wet, she got a bad attack of fever, just as she was setting out on her return journey to Eshowe, and a very bad time she had. As soon as she reached the hotel she retired to bed and remained there for a week. At the end of that time, feeling tired of her own society, she was thankful to be able to get up and pick up the threads of ordinary life.

Among her first visitors was the Bishop of Zululand. A few years later, during the Boer War, the same Bishop used to shepherd his flock so vigorously, in spite of the Boer invasion of Zululand, that he fell several times into the hands of the enemy. He was always released, though his horses and conveyances were confiscated, and at last a staff officer told Maggie that he feared they would have to bring the Bishop before a court martial "for supplying the enemy with transport." Another early visitor was Colonel Mansel, then Commandant of the Nongai or Zululand Police, whose headquarters were at Eshowe. This force had been raised by Colonel Mansel in 1883, Sir Henry Bulwer, at that time Governor of Natal and Zululand, having decided to raise a native force in Zululand for service in that country. Sir Henry offered Colonel Mansel the appointment of Commandant of the new force, and the latter consequently resigned his commission as Inspector in the Natal Mounted Police to enter

on his new work. The Nongai<sup>1</sup> did excellent service against their rebellious countrymen, and distinguished themselves greatly during the troubled times that followed their enlistment.

When the Nongai were working with our white troops during the native rising in Zululand, the use of their language gave rise to many difficulties in their dealings with the whites. One night, when the duty of guarding the camp fell to the Nongai, and Commandant Mansel had posted his sentries, he was asked by a brother officer for the password. "Dimbili"—Dombili—was the answer. "Oh, my dear fellow," came the expostulation from the O.C. of the white regiment, "my men will never remember such a word." "Tell them, then, it's 'Damn Billy,'" suggested the resourceful leader of the Nongai, and in this form our men had no difficulty about the password!

A review of the Nongai was given while Maggie was at Eshowe, and the men were a splendid set of highly-trained Zulus, who drilled in capital style. The Commandant soon called the attention of his sergeant to the fact that one of the men's belts was not properly cleaned. The sequel horrified my sister. The sergeant flew to the offender, and shouting, "You dirty boy," he seized him by the ear, and twisted this member round and round till Maggie expected to see it come off. "Oh, Commandant!" she exclaimed, "Stop him. Stop him. He will twist the man's ear off." It was all right, though, for everyone took the little incident as a matter of course, and the ear remained on its owner's head. Altogether the review was a thing to be remembered, and Maggie was much impressed with the fine carriage and the skill shown by the men.

Soon after this my sister had the narrowest escape in

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.

connection with horses that she has ever achieved. A lady residing at Eshowe had a very spirited and well-bred mare that was not considered very safe. Her owner, however, had ridden the mare and offered to lend her to Maggie, though the latter said frankly that she preferred a quiet mount. A ride, however, was determined on, and Empress promptly took charge and bolted over about as bad a bit of country as she could find anywhere. In her mad course she flew straight over some cattle that were lying in her path, luckily clearing each beast in her stride before it could realise that anything was coming, and jump up. How they got over them safely Maggie never could understand; and just as the mare's mad gallop brought her to the bush, where destruction was absolutely certain, she pulled up of her own accord. Not long after this exploit Empress ran away again, with a man this time, and she was consequently got rid of as being incorrigible.

From Eshowe Maggie returned to Rorke's Drift, for she was still bent on the waggon trip, that could not be arranged in the teeth of the official disapproval at the former place. An ox waggon carried her by slow stages as far as the Lower Tugela, the military cart again not being available at the moment. With her baggage was a splendid pair of koodoo horns that now adorn our walls in England. These were given to her by the old trader Adams, a well-known colonial, deservedly popular with the handful of soldiers and civilians stationed at Eshowe. From the Lower Tugela the post-cart and train took her back to Durban, where she once more put up at the Beach Hotel.

In those days many people from Maritzburg used to run down to Durban for a few weeks during the winter, and among the Maritzburg visitors at the Beach Maggie found some old acquaintances. Some of these persuaded

her to spend a week at Maritzburg and promised her a good time, as the cavalry and garrison races were just coming off there. The only difficulty about this was that she had no suitable frock with her for the coming festivities. Staying at the Beach, however, was an excellent Maritzburg dressmaker, and though like the other visitors on pleasure bent at the time, the important lady being approached with tact, condescended to plan out a triumph in white and gold, that left nothing to be desired when it appeared at the races.

After a gay and pleasant week my sister left Maritzburg for Rorke's Drift, this time driving straight out from Glencoe Junction and putting up at Barklie's Hotel. Here she set about making preparations for her deferred waggon trip, and while these were going on she had a very interesting time, the popular Resident Magistrate, Mr. Addison and his family, and the Assistant Magistrate, Mr. Gillson, doing everything they could to fill up her days pleasantly.

One day Mr. Gillson brought the Basuto chief, Hlubi, to pay her a solemn visit. This chief had been a faithful servant to the English rulers for many years. As a young man he and a few of his men had been with Colonel Durnford at the Bushman's River Pass affair. When the rush took place, the Basutos were carried away with the Carbineers, but they rallied quickly, and when Major Durnford—as he was then—joined them, they covered the retreat gallantly. Hlubi and his men were also with Lord Chelmsford's column when it entered Zululand, and they were left with the force in charge of the camp at Isandhlwana. It was only when Hlubi saw the horns of the huge Zulu army closing upon the camp, and he knew that all was lost, that he fled with his followers into safety. At the close of the war, when Zululand was divided



up into districts, Hlubi was appointed chief of one of them.

Mr. Gillson confided to Maggie before he brought the veteran chief to see her, that whenever he wanted to rile old Hlubi he teased him about having run away from Isandhlwana. But Hlubi's courage was too well proved, I fancy, for him to mind much about the teasing. Maggie received Hlubi in state, and the "indaba" came off with all due ceremony. Hostess and visitor made polite conversation through Mr. Gillson, who acted as interpreter. Hlubi apparently enjoyed his visit greatly, and tried to induce Maggie to promise to take back his favourite daughter with her to England. His ideas of a finishing education appeared to be quite up-to-date, but his hostess refused firmly to undertake such a responsibility as the charge of a black Miss Hlubi.

There are many interesting places within reach of Rorke's Drift. Only four miles from it on the Zululand side of the Buffalo and at the head of the Bashee Valley once lay the large kraal of Sirayo, destroyed by Lord Chelmsford's men the day after they crossed the river in their invasion of Zululand. It was Sirayo's two sons, Meshla-ka-zulu and Beku-zulu, who chased two wives of the chief, their father, when they had run away with two Natal Zulus, and bringing them back to Zululand, killed them. This fate the women deserved by Zulu law, but the incident was one of the chief ostensible causes of the war.

After the war was over, Sir Evelyn Wood asked Meshla-ka-zulu (Eyes of the Zulu) why he had not shot the two men also.

"Oh," was the answer, "my father did not pay for them as he did for the women, for whom he had given cattle, and besides, the men were subjects of the British Government."

This seems pretty sound logic, and when the General went on to ask if Sirayo had known of his sons' raid at the time, he was told that he did not. Further inquiry elicited from Meshla-ka-zulu that he did not know whether his father approved of his wives being shot, but that the chief had said nothing when he was told of their fate. This all seems very characteristic of Zulus.

Meshla-ka-zulu was one of the leaders of the Ngobamakosi Regiment at Isandhlwana, and with his impi overwhelmed the rocket battery, destroying the gunners and horses until the ground was indeed a "kraal of slaughter." He was also one of the chiefs who attacked Sir Evelyn Wood's force successfully on the Hlobane Mountain in March of the following year, when so many of our men were killed and Sir Redvers Buller won his V.C. Meshla-ka-zulu himself died fighting, shot by a friend of ours in the Mome Gorge in 1906, during Colonel—now Sir Duncan—Mackenzie's suppression of Bambaata's rising. He was a fine savage warrior, and one who had "the courage of his convictions." It might, I think, be said of him, as of another Zulu chief killed by our Native Contingent during the same rebellion, and described by one of the officers who found the body :—

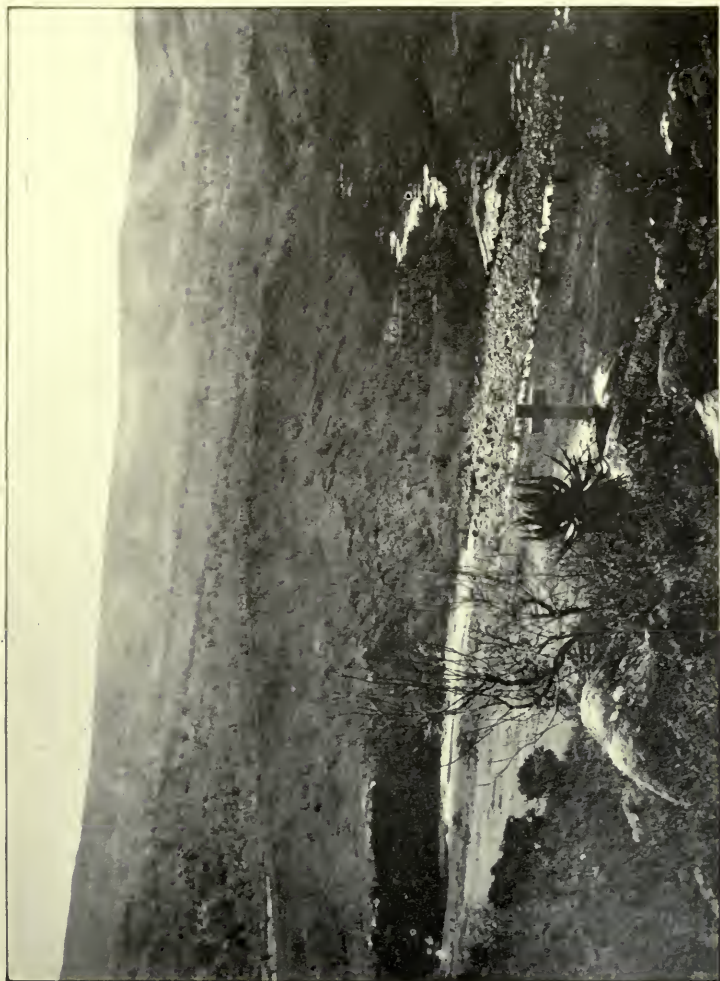
"He was a fine-looking man, and though the friendlies had ripped him open as is their custom, there was nothing repulsive, but much that was noble and impressive in the pose of the body and the look on the dead man's face, which was without a trace of fear or agony. For it looked the face of a brave man and a fighter, who had always considered that what he had dealt out to others he must one day expect himself, and was prepared to meet. We left him unburied, of course; we had no spades, and it was not our duty, anyhow. But I thought that if he had had any say in the matter, he would have preferred the

sunny glade in which he lay to a roughly dug hole in the ground."

A second visit to Isandhlwana was made by Maggie from Rorke's Drift, and one day she and Mr. Gillson rode out to Fugitives' Drift, about eight miles down the Buffalo—such a wild, rough ride along native paths, and a desolate and impressive scene when reached. There was no trace of human habitation, the river and far-stretching veld lying as lonely and desolate as it must have been on the day of Isandhlwana, till its peace was broken by the scattered remnants of our forces as they were pursued by the triumphant Zulus, mad with the lust of battle. The one monument, a simple cross, rises high up on the river bank, and commemorates the undying story of Lieutenants Melville and Coghill's gallant effort to save the colours of the 24th Regiment. The two men only left the battlefield when all resistance was hopeless, and they fought their way to Fugitives' Drift and across the Buffalo, to die on English soil, fighting to the end. On the cross put up to them there is on the reverse, "For Queen and Country," and "Jesu Mercy." There could be no nobler epitaph to any man; and

" Surely their slumber is sweet,  
Though the wind from the camp of the dead men blow  
And the rain on the wilderness beat."

When Major Black and a few other officers, with a small escort of the Natal Mounted Police, went out on February 4, 1879, in search of the missing colours of the 24th, they found the bodies of Lieutenants Coghill and Melville lying about three hundred yards from the river among some boulders. The colours had been given to Lieutenant Melville to save if possible, and Lieutenant Coghill had turned back to help him. They were found soon after the bodies of the two men who had died in their effort to save



FUGITIVES' DRIFT.

SHOWING THE CROSS OVER LIEUTENANTS MELVILLE AND COGHILL'S GRAVES ON THE NATAL SIDE OF THE RIVER.

*To face p. 138.*





them, for Major Black's little party came upon them in the river. They had evidently been dropped while crossing, and the staff was broken and the colours much knocked about. What a welcome they had when they were brought into Rorke's Drift! A man rode ahead to say that they had been found, and the troops, wild with excitement, turned out to meet the party, and presented arms as the colours were brought in. Some of the older men even flew to the colours and kissed them with tears in their eyes.

Sympathising with Maggie's keen interest in the incidents of the Zulu war, Mr. Addison proposed getting up a hunt for her in the native style, as he said that the Zulu method of hunting being almost exactly like their way of fighting, this would give her an excellent idea of how their army encircled our doomed camp at Isandhlwana. The hunt was arranged accordingly, and carried out on a large scale.

Several hundred Zulus were sent on to the selected ground, which was the stretch of country lying to the S.E. of Isandhlwana, and Maggie, Mr. Addison, Mr. Gillson, and another man rode out to Blick's store on the afternoon of the day before that fixed for the hunt. There they dined and spent the night. To my sister's use the only bedroom was given up, and beside the very scanty supply of necessary furniture, an array of broken concertinas and flitches of bacon adorned the walls and roof. Early on the following morning the little party rode off to the place where their army of Zulu beaters had been ordered to meet them. The first thing, of course, was the usual "indaba" with the Zulu chiefs, and this was a leisurely proceeding. Hurry is most undignified in native eyes, and nothing is ever arranged with or by Zulus without many lengthy speeches. The Resident Magistrate, as a great chief, had to be received with fitting honour.

Then the Zulu chief had to be presented to Maggie, and he made a most ceremonious address to her. The Zulu language is soft and musical, and altogether charming to listen to, being as different as possible from the harsh Cape Dutch or the Hottentot lingo, which is all clicks and grunts. The Zulu way of speaking, too, is most picturesque. On this occasion the well-bred chief's words were to the effect that he, his headmen, and people were overjoyed at the presence of such a chieftainess. Never before had a great English princess honoured their hunt with her presence, and doubtless their success would be many times greater than it had ever been before.

Unfortunately, this cheerful prophecy hardly came true, as, though the white guns did pretty well, the natives, who were allowed to follow up the buck with their assegais, did not have a good day. But prophets, however flowery, cannot always be right. The hunt took up nearly a whole day and was most interesting. The Zulu beaters formed in a close body and advanced to a certain point. Then the horns shot out from either side, right and left, just as they did at 'Sandhlwane, circling further and further, until the stretched-out tips met and the circle was complete. Nothing within it could escape. The white men—and Maggie, who was the only one taking no part in the proceedings—stood about the middle of the enclosed circle, and shot down the buck as they were driven past them. The rest fell to the assegais of the Zulus. My sister still has a pretty pair of rae-buck horns that belonged to one of the animals she saw shot that day. It was not till night was coming on rapidly that the hunt was ended, and all the party were glad to get over the Smallpox River—a most suggestive name, and, I believe, of only too sad origin—and back to Blick's shanty for the night.

During one of Maggie's rides, while she was at Barklie's Hotel, she and her escort, Mr. Gillson, heard a scuffle in the grass near the road. In a moment Mr. Gillson had turned his horse and began lashing vigorously at the undergrowth, and shouting to his dogs, who were struggling furiously with a small beast.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed in horror, "they have got a polecat, and it is too late to get them off."

This polecat, as it is commonly called in Natal, is really a Zorilla. It resembles a polecat in size and form, and is a link between the weasel and skunk. Of the latter it has the colouring, and its smell is almost as bad.

The rest of the ride was spoiled by the terrible odour that clung to the dogs after their encounter. In vain the riders tried to drive off the too-friendly animals; they would stick close to their master. As poor Mr. Gillson said, they were sure to rub themselves against everything they could at the house before he could get them cleaned, and the smell would cling to the place for days. Another ride was varied by Mr. Gillson's horse being seized with colic during an off-saddle. Luckily, my sister had her whisky flask with her, and the entire contents went down the horse's throat. It recovered promptly and completely, so its views were evidently not of a teetotal kind.

One visit Maggie much regretted that her many distractions prevented her from making while she was at Rorke's Drift. This was to an old, old woman who had known Tshaka, the great Zulu king, a contemporary of Napoleon. Considering the lesser opportunities of the native magnate, not an insignificant rival of the better-known Emperor either, Tshaka is believed to have accounted for the lives of over a million of his fellow-creatures. He did not waste his chances, clearly! We used to know an old lady who was a link with the days of Napoleon. It was,



indeed, only a few years before we went to South Africa that the death had taken place of a friend of our family whose elder half-sister had been engaged to Robespierre, and whose engagement had been broken off owing to the Revolution. Our dear old friend, who was far over eighty when we first knew her, was a wonderful woman in spite of her age. Her reminiscences were most interesting, and I only wish that I had appreciated them in those days as I should have done when I was older. Tshaka's old friend was still perfectly clear in her mind, and would talk most freely about the long-dead despot and his days. It was a great pity that my sister's time was so much taken up by the preparations for her journey that she could not manage to see the old native woman.

After a great deal of trouble, a waggon suitable for Maggie's projected wanderings was found. It belonged to the Baroness von Postle, a member of the Swedish Mission at Rorke's Drift, who allowed Maggie to hire it for a very moderate sum. The waggon was exactly what she wanted, for as it was only intended for pleasure expeditions, it was quite small and light when compared with the great lumbering buck-waggons in general use. It had a canvas hood stretched on a wooden frame over its entire length, and required only eight oxen, instead of sixteen or eighteen, the usual number of a team.

For some time it seemed as if the oxen would never be got together. Mr. Gillson took Maggie over to a chief who lived in the neighbourhood and asked him to produce the required oxen, but the chief, in his most courteous language, refused to be in any way responsible for a young English lady going alone on such an expedition. He said that he feared harm would come to her, and then he should be blamed for having helped her. Mr. Addison also spoke most strongly against the project, though he would not

actually interfere to prevent it. He told Maggie, however, that he considered it most unsafe for her to go into Zululand by herself, as he did not think the natives were to be trusted. Besides, it was already September, and the rains had broken unusually early that year, so that the roads were likely to be in a state that would make even a colonial man hesitate to set out on a trip through Zululand.

All this, though most excellent advice, did not turn my sister from her purpose. She was determined to carry it through, and at last the right oxen were procured, and her further arrangements proceeded hopefully. Barklie's store provided the necessary furniture, which was of the simplest description. The cartel of the waggon could be arranged to form a bed, and the necessary blankets, a pillow, and sheets were taken. These sheets Maggie insisted on having washed about every day while she was outspanned at Eshowe, and was living in a tent. She even borrowed an iron and ironed them out herself, to her great satisfaction. There were a few articles of cutlery, etc., a washing basin, a bucket, and a kettle, or kettler, as Zulu servants always call it. Maggie's bodyguard on the journey learned "kettler" as his first word of English, and was so proud of his accomplishment that at first he would put his head into the waggon a dozen times in an hour, saying, with a delighted grin, "Kettler, Inkozikas!"

When a store of tinned provisions had been laid in, there were only the servants to be provided. Mr. Addison, much as he disapproved of the expedition, did all in his power to ensure my sister's safety, when he found that she was bent on going. He took an immense amount of trouble to get the most reliable Zulu he could, to act as her bodyguard. The man he chose finally was what is called a court messenger. This man's duty is to go on

errands for the magistrate, a brass badge marks his calling, and he is usually to be seen squatting on the ground outside a court-house or magistracy, talking to the many natives who always hang about the place. At other times he is about his duty, going along at a steady run, carrying his message in one hand and a bundle of kerries in the other. Maggie's bodyguard was, of course, a raw Zulu, perfectly ignorant of white people and their ways, beyond what he had picked up when waiting outside the houses to which he had been sent with messages. He had never been inside an English house, and did not know a single word of our language. His costume, besides his badge and the usual mutya, was that of Nature only, though recent legislation has enacted that the messengers should be clothed. But Mr. Addison's choice was justified, for his Zulu proved fidelity itself. I cannot say what terrors had been promised him if harm came to his charge, but I daresay death by slow torture or something equally pleasant. At any rate he was his mistress's shadow during the whole of her trip, never could she get away from her faithful follower. If she walked, he strode solemnly behind her. If she dined with friends at Eshowe, her bodyguard would escort her to the house and wait outside, often in cold and rain, thunder and lightning, till she left. Though she might have dismissed him before going in, by vigorous waving of her hands and the order "Hamba, hamba" (go), when she emerged, a black figure would spring up from some lurking place near, and with the salute of "Inkozikas," he would follow her homewards. At last my sister gave up worrying about him, and resigned herself to the man's constant, silent, watchful presence. It was best to let him do his duty according to his lights, just as no doubt he had done it sixteen years before, when he was one of the great Impi at Isandhlwana. It was from him

that Maggie, after much difficulty, bought the broad-bladed stabbing assegai that he had used in the battle.

The Swedish Mission produced Hendrick, the driver. He was a Natal native and a Christian, and the Magistracy looked doubtfully upon him, Christian Kafirs not being much trusted by the whites in South Africa. Mr. Addison remarked of Hendrick: "Well, he has about the most repulsive face I ever saw," and certainly Hendrick's appearance was not his strong point. Still, he proved better than his looks, managed his oxen well, and did the small amount of cooking required. Indeed, soon after the start, he came out in a new light, for he owned to knowing a little English, which proved to be most useful. The Mission people had said that he knew no English, and it was very like a native to keep his knowledge of our language dark, only confessing to it after a time and even then gradually. To English minds it is at once curious and troublesome the way natives love to hide their knowledge, even when there seems no possible reason for their doing so. If you ask a question, they will look stupid, shake their heads and say, "Ikona, ikona" (I don't know), though all the time you know perfectly well that if they chose to speak out they could tell you what you want to know. Another favourite way of putting you off is by answering your question with another. The only way to arrive at what you want is to possess your soul in patience, and let the native tell you in his own dark fashion and at his own time. The third and last retainer was the voer-loeper, a small umfan (boy) raw from his kraal, whose acquaintance with white people was just a little less than that of the court messenger!

At last all was ready, and the start was fixed for seven o'clock one morning. On the previous day Maggie went for a last long ride with Mr. Addison, his little son, and



Mr. Gillson. The two men were going out to inspect the site of the new magistracy at Nqutu, as the Rorke's Drift magistracy was to be moved to the former place. My sister little thought on this, her first visit to Nqutu, that a few years later she would be in the English camp there, with the Boers close at hand, and expected to attack at every moment.

At the time of the first brief visit Nqutu consisted of one building only, the usual up-country store, where Mr. Addison and his party put up. Leaving their horses at the store they settled on the site for the new magistracy, and returned to pick up their horses with the intention of riding back at once. In the meantime, however, a great storm had gathered, and it broke with such a blaze of lightning, roar of thunder and deluge of rain, that the party had to stay where they were, only too thankful to be under shelter. Mr. Addison wisely made arrangements for them to pass the night there, but as the darkness came on, the worst of the storm having apparently passed over, Mr. Gillson volunteered to ride back and relieve Mrs. Addison's mind as to the fate of her husband and son. Although the weather was still very bad, Maggie thought of her early start next morning, and decided to return with Mr. Gillson. They all did their best to persuade her not to venture, but as she had no fear of thunder, and was determined if possible to keep to the plans she had made, she insisted on setting out. The storekeeper produced from his shelves a new thick native blanket, which was fastened securely over her habit, to give her what protection was possible, and she and her companion started on their tempestuous ride.

The storm was still raging overhead, and the rivers, shallow streams when they crossed them in the morning, were now spreading over their low banks for two or three

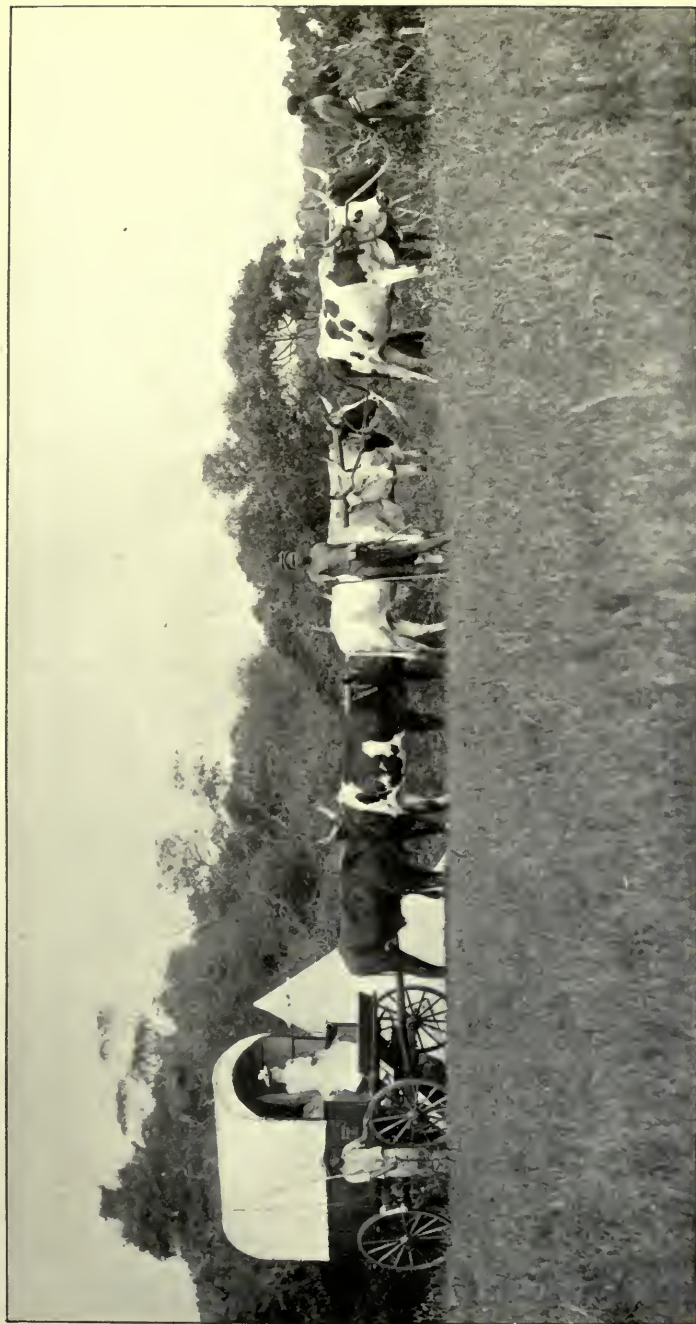
hundred feet over the veld. The rain came down in torrents, drenching the riders to the skin in a very few minutes, and making the rivers more and more difficult to cross as they went on. The great wide stretches of water looked sufficiently alarming as they were seen by the glare of the lightning. They were passed safely enough, though, in the usual South African fashion, Mr. Gillson riding first through the drifts to see if they were possible, and then going back to give Maggie's horse a lead over. At last they reached Rorke's Drift, none the worse for their wetting, but my sister's habit was so soaked through, that it had to be hung up inside the waggon for days, to dry slowly.

At the appointed hour next morning the start was made, and Maggie was, at last, fairly off on her travels. Her plan was to trek across Zululand as far as Eshowe, not going, however, by the direct way, as she wished to visit the Denny Dalton Gold Mines *en route*. She had been invited to go to the mines by one of the Denny family, whom she had met at Maritzburg, when her trip was being spoken of. She decided to accept the invitation, as the gold mine was the only one then being worked in Zululand, and she was anxious to see it. The first part of her road was over the same track over which she had already ridden several times as far as Isandhlwana. Mr. Gillson accompanied the waggon for the first trek, which lasted as usual till the heat of the sun began to get fierce. Then a halt was made on the banks of a convenient stream, the oxen were outspanned to rest and feed, and breakfast for the travellers was prepared. Then Mr. Gillson returned to Rorke's Drift, and Maggie was left to go on by herself. Her journey lasted for three months, her only companions being her three native servants and a small dog she picked up soon after she started.

It was when she was passing Blick's store that Mr. Blick offered her a nondescript woolly-haired terrier that he thought would be a companion for her. Marly was not too well mannered, neither was he handsome, and when he was presented to Maggie he was adorned with a bead necklace instead of a collar. He was certainly a strange-looking little creature, but when the necklace was removed, he became more English and self-respecting, though he never rose to great heights in the dog world. He never could resist temptation in the way of tit-bits that were not meant for him. Poor little Marly, no doubt he meant well, but he had been badly brought up, and as a dog-loving friend said of him while he was with Maggie, "He knew he was not really loved." Still, I fear there was much that he missed in life when on my sister's return he was given back to Mr. Blick. After being an only dog, it must have been hard to share the chances of life with the Kafir curs who had been his early companions.

Trekking along in easy fashion over the open hilly country, it took some time to reach the Denny Dalton Mine. The rain, too, caused delays. On several occasions the oxen could not be inspanned until the yokes and strops had been dried, as the wet hide would have rubbed the oxen and caused sores. The rivers were swollen, and though none proved actually unfordable, in one case the water was so deep that it flowed over the floor of the waggon, and caused Maggie much alarm about the state in which she might find her clothes if the men were not quick enough in raising her trunks out of harm's way. Happily, nothing was injured owing to the prompt action of the men, and the frocks came out at Eshowe perfectly fresh and dry.

There were difficulties about trekking through a country where at that time English girls were almost, if not quite,



MRS. BRUCE STEER IN ZULULAND.

*To face p. 148.*





unknown. As Maggie passed the Zulu kraals, the women, full of curiosity, flocked out of their huts and swarmed round the waggon to see her. Their interest in the ways of the white Inkozikas never failed. They would arrive so early in the morning that it was quite disconcerting. Even without an audience there are difficulties attending a bath in a waggon. But when a corner of the tent of the waggon was lifted suddenly, and a dark face appeared, gazing round inquisitively, the situation became impossible. Once the traveller had to whisk out of her bath, and putting her head through the flap of the tent, call to her driver, with what dignity she could command: "Hendrick, will you please tell these ladies to retire, till I am dressed and can receive them properly."

Hendrick, happily, understood at least the drift of her remark, for the dusky ladies vanished amid squeals of laughter, and appeared no more till a reasonable hour.

There were many of these friendly visits, and the Zulu women appeared to enjoy them immensely. My sister used to present them very ceremoniously with packets of needles, and they were always delighted with their gifts. Some of the Zulus, men and women, who came to wonder at the sight of the white lady and her waggon, brought eggs for sale. The shopping was rather quaint. Hendrick used to measure the eggs by putting them in his hat, and then he would hold the hat out to Maggie for her to fix the price, her decision as to what was fair being always accepted. My sister's way of offering her price was to hold up a penny, and then lift up her left hand with fingers outstretched according to the number of the pence. If this was sixpence, her usual price for half a hatful of eggs, all the fingers would be held up. Then the hand dropped and raised again with only the little finger lifted. White people often use this method of counting with

natives. When an indefinitely large number is to be expressed, both hands are thrown up several times with the fingers stretched out, and the word "Meninge, meninge," is uttered. The natives, who are marvellously quick in grasping our meaning, understand what is meant at once.

One or two whites turned up as the waggon lumbered slowly on its road. One day a white prospector came, quite avowedly out of curiosity, saying frankly that he had heard an English lady was travelling through Zululand, and though he had not believed the tale, he had come to see for himself. Having explained his visit and paid his respects to his hostess, he departed, assured that Maggie and her party were a tangible fact. Another visitor had arrived with his waggon at an outspan selected by Hendrick before his mistress came up. A lovely spot it was, by a stream whose steep banks were covered with beautiful verdure. The German trader, who was already in possession, soon came to call on my sister, and proved to be quite amusing and well-mannered. Speaking in quaint broken English, he discoursed about the first Boer War. The stout old German had no high opinion of our men, and said, roundly: "Ach! your soldiers are no good."

At another outspan by a little wandering spruit, Maggie took a stroll by the stream to wile away the time between the midday meal and the afternoon trek. Passing round a bend of the spruit only about fifty yards above her outspan, she saw to her horror a dead ox lying in the water, right across the tiny rivulet. The body had been hidden by the bend in the river, and as Maggie had been drinking the polluted water with lime juice for luncheon, it was really a great pity that her walk took her to the place. She would have been much happier in ignorance, as no ill effects followed. As for the Zulus,

I do not suppose they would have cared in the least had they known of the presence of the carcase, for they are completely indifferent to such trifles.

When at last Nondweni was reached, Maggie was fully repaid for the trouble of getting to the out-of-the-way spot. The gold mine was so quaintly primitive, and so different to those at Johannesburg, with their great buildings and thronging thousands of white and black men. Here there were only the Dennys, a doctor, and a few other white people. Still, quite a little town of tents, and wood and iron shanties had sprung up round the mine, and everyone was in a bustle of excitement. That feverish excitement that seems to hang over mines whose fate is in the balance, and which may turn out to be worth millions, or may ruin their unlucky promoters and shareholders.

At the time of my sister's visit, the Denny Dalton Mine was all hopeful anticipation. She was shown all over it, and was struck with the primitive arrangements that were all that was possible, so far from a railway and even from proper roads. She inspected the workings, watched the little trucks running about full of the stuff from which the gold was to be washed, and she was even given some of the gold dust, that she had seen separated from the dirt, as a souvenir of her visit. Everyone was so nice to their visitor that it was with the deepest regret she heard only a little later that the mine was a failure, and one of her kindly, cheery hosts had died broken-hearted at the result of his enterprise.

One of the only two ladies living at Nondweni used to send my sister every morning a nice breakfast, that included butter made by the kindly donor. Even a dinner party was got up in her honour. Though it was held in a tin shanty, it proved the greatest success, everything going off splendidly. One of the ladies had a small servant who



took Maggie's fancy greatly. Jacob's age was, say, seven, and he was "general servant" to the establishment. In figure he was plump, not to say rotund, and his livery—a mutya! His strong point was his manner. Cheerful, he could certainly have been guaranteed, had his character been required. He grinned joyfully whenever addressed. He carried loads of plates and dishes about, and dropped them, as though it was the finest joke in the world. He laughed when he appeared in a room, and he laughed as he disappeared. Presumably, the humour of his being the sole staff of a white household amused Jacob's shining hours from morning to night. All the Zulu men being at work in the mines accounted for the dusky infant's responsible position. He had shown a sense of this when he was engaged, for on being asked what wages he was to be given monthly, he promptly answered "Five pounds." Five shillings would probably have been his market value.

About twenty miles from the barren, hilly country in which Nondweni lay, was Ulundi, once Cetewayo's great kraal, and where the last battle of the Zulu War was fought. One of Mr. Denny's sons proposed to take Maggie to Ulundi, but there was great difficulty in carrying out the project. Of course, riding was the only possible way of getting there, and there was not such a thing as a side-saddle in the camp. Horses there were in plenty, but it was only after two or three days' search that at last a saddle was unearthed. The way to Ulundi was rough and wild in the extreme. Narrow native paths led them right into the heart of Zululand, a beautiful hilly country, watered by the White Umfolosi.

At that time few white people penetrated into that part of the country, and Mr. Denny said that he did not think the natives had ever seen a white lady. As they passed through

the kraals that lay on their way, the Zulus hurried out and pressed round my sister to look at such a novelty. One old woman chattered so much, evidently amusing Mr. Denny, that as they left the kraal Maggie inquired what the talk had been about. She was told that the old native had been so impressed by the sight of her that she had asked where the Inkos had found anything so wonderful. Mr. Denny told her gravely that he had dug the lady out of his mine, but the woman was sceptical, and refused to believe the white man's story. I remember that once when I was visiting a kraal with a friend, the natives' laughing questions and glances at me made me ask, as we rode away, what they had been saying. My friend, who was a married man, answered with a laugh: "Oh, they only wanted to know what I had done with the old Inkozikas, now I had got a new young one."

When my sister and her escort reached the drift through which they were to cross the White Umfolosi, the river was swollen with rain, and flowing so deeply, that it seemed impossible to get through. Mr. Denny, rode into the water to try its depth, and suddenly his horse plunged wildly and floundered about in a most alarming manner. It had got into quicksands. Luckily horse and rider managed to get out, and Mr. Denny making another attempt a little farther off, succeeded in crossing. When, however, he returned to Maggie, he said that he feared they must give up Ulundi, as though the drift was just possible, they could only get over by swimming the horses. My sister took the idea of her wetting philosophically, and having ascertained from her companion that her horse could swim, decided to go on, and she reached the other side with no worse results than a wet habit.

From the high ridge over which the path ran soon

after leaving the Umfolosi, they looked down over the swelling plain of Ulundi. All round were hilly slopes covered with mimosa trees, interspersed with masses of sugar bush and aloes with their bright scarlet blooms. Below them lay the basin-like valley, where once the six great kraals of the capital of Zululand had stood. What a different scene it must have been in those days. Then huge circles of beehive-shaped huts had been there, and conspicuous in the largest of the circles was Cetewayo's square house. The kraals were swarming with warriors, and busy chattering women were working in the mealie patches or carrying their calabashes of water, gracefully poised on their heads. Children shouted and played, and cattle innumerable, the royal white herd showing up among the ordinary coloured beasts, pastured on the hill slopes, Kafir dogs barked, and all was bustle and animation.

When Maggie and Mr. Denny pulled up their horses and gazed down on the scene before them, all was changed. The valley lay at their feet, a silent, lonely wilderness. No native huts stood where once the king of "The People of the Heavens" had ruled. No human habitation was visible except a little Kafir store kept by a white trader, and that stood far from the site of Cetewayo's kraals. Plainly on the deserted veld could be still seen where those six huge military kraals had stood. The circles, even the sites of the huts, could be traced on the grassy plain, and Cetewayo's own kraal, the largest of all, lying between two euphorbia trees, whose poisonous branches spread over the empty circle, rose up as the only monument to the last representative of a savage dynasty. A dynasty upheld by men, who if they were cruel and bloodthirsty, were at any rate brave and honest according to their lights.

No Kafir path even led by the royal kraals. The ground is sacred, and Zulu etiquette—"thlonipa"—forbids it even being trod by desecrating, careless feet. On a slope of the hillside, not far from where the Zulu kraals stood, lay the little graveyard where our soldiers who fell in the battle were laid to rest. A lonely little God's Acre, grass grown, and surrounded by a broken stone wall. And all around the quiet valley lay the hills, still marked with endless native paths, telling how once thousands of busy feet had passed to and fro at the king's command.

Maggie and her escort, after going over Ulundi, had luncheon at the little store near at hand, and then set off on the return ride, once again crossing the Umfolosi in safety. My sister was disappointed at seeing no crocodiles when crossing the river. Not one would appear to thrill her, and at that time there was—and very likely still is—an excellent chance of seeing crocodiles on either the Black or White Umfolosi. A few rhino are also occasionally to be found on either river, and Sir John Dartnell once saw a white rhino on the Umfolosi. Neither rhino nor crocodile, however, showed up for Maggie's benefit.

After spending several very pleasant days that were full of interest at the Denny Dalton Mine, my sister's oxen were again inspanned, and she trekked off on her way to Eshowe. As before, the waggon lumbered slowly on its way, and just as it reached Melmoth, a day's journey from Eshowe, an unlucky accident happened. When Maggie was sitting in the waggon behind the driver, the tip of Hendrich's lash, as he flicked at his oxen, flew back and caught her just over the eye. As she naturally objected to appearing at Eshowe with a black eye, she acted with energy and promptitude. The waggon was pulled up at the butcher's store, and the time-honoured remedy of a piece of raw beef was applied to the eye. It was rather



trying to hold beefsteak to her face for the rest of the day, in a jolting, shaking waggon, but she persevered and the remedy proved efficacious. Next morning the eye was all right, and Eshowe was entered with due dignity.

At Eshowe my sister met with the warmest of welcomes from everyone. One friend who met her six miles out of the town claimed the kind office of supplying her with milk during the whole of her stay. Now milk is a most valued gift in that country, for oddly enough in a land that then abounded in cattle, condensed milk was all that could be obtained in most places. As soon as the waggon arrived at its destined outspan, between the camp and the civilian town, another friend sent his men down with a capital police tent. This was furnished with a comfortable camp bed that had been used by Sir Redvers Buller throughout the Zulu War. When he left the country Sir Redvers had given the bed to the friend who lent it to Maggie. A chair and a washstand were also provided, and the tent and waggon together made quite a palatial abode. Two rooms! Indeed, as the native servants slept under the waggon, I might almost say *three* rooms.

Behind the outspan stretched a most lovely wood, along whose winding paths there were delightful rides. The bush made a perfect background for her camp, and Maggie refused to be alarmed at the warnings she was given about the leopard who occupied it. This animal also occupied the minds of the Eshowe sportsmen. All took a turn at hunting him, but no one succeeded in bagging the wily creature.

Eshowe was a lovely place. The hard, barren appearance of Northern Zululand had disappeared several days before my sister reached the Garden of Zululand, as the Eshowe district is often called. All was verdure and luxuriant vegetation. Beautiful flowers and fruit flourished

everywhere. Granadillas, bougainvillea, tree-ferns, the delicate tecoma and the starry blossoms of the *Rhyncus spiliunum* crowded one upon the other. Climbing over the verandas and roofs of the pretty bungalows was the golden creeper, a rain of yellow-red beauty. Arum lilies grew in profusion, as they had done almost all along the waggon route. As soon as Maggie's faithful bodyguard had grasped the fact that his mistress loved them, he used to search the spruits' banks every day and keep her supplied.

Besides the pretty bungalows there was a delightfully novel house at Eshowe, belonging to Commandant Mansel, whose Nongai Barracks stood near. This house consisted of a group of huts, or, more correctly, "rondavels," made of daub and wattle, and very superior to the ordinary native huts of straw and wattle. Each rondavel had a door, windows, and a fireplace, and formed a room, and the drawing-room, dining-room, and other huts were connected by light passage-ways, suggestive of pergolas. Later, the Commandant built a house, but it seemed quite a pity to leave his huts. They were so very picturesque, their only drawback being that in wet weather the passages were apt to be a little sloppy.

Eshowe was the post held so long by Colonel Pearson with a small garrison in the Zulu War. When our army first entered Zululand, Colonel Pearson and his men—the first column—were ordered to march on Ulundi by way of Eshowe, and they were at the latter place when the news of our disaster at Isandhlwana reached them. Colonel Pearson at once sent back his cavalry to Natal, and lagaared the rest of his force in a hastily-constructed fort, deciding to remain where he was until relieved. Early in April Lord Chelmsford, with reinforcements from England, reached Eshowe, and the long-projected march on Ulundi took place. After the war British troops were

stationed at Eshowe, these, at the time of Maggie's visit, being reduced to a wing of the infantry regiment stationed at Maritzburg and a few details. Their camp was about a mile from the civilian town. At the present time there are no imperial troops in the place, the Nongai are abolished, and Eshowe is guarded by Natal police. Just outside the town lay a pretty little graveyard, where the men of Colonel Pearson's column who died during the war were buried.

It was quite a gay little town in the days when Maggie knew it, and dinner parties, dances, sports at the camp, and other diversions made the time pass merrily. A great, and up to that time unknown, event happened during her visit. A professional photographer found his way to the place. Everyone, of course, was photographed, my sister and her waggon included. Maggie was dreadfully teased later about that photograph. Friends used to ask her facetiously: "Why do you not sell it to some firm, labelled 'We all returned in this condition through using Thorley's Food for Cattle, or Pears' Soap, or something?'" The cattle, and indeed the whole party, do look in excellent condition, but my sister never tried to carry out the enterprising suggestion! Funnily enough, though, the photograph was made use of without our knowledge, for some years ago it appeared in a magazine, illustrating an article upon African travel. I came across it quite by accident, and very much astonished we both were.

One day another waggon arrived, and was outspanned about a couple of hundred yards from Maggie's camp. The travellers consisted of a man and his wife and their native servants. Soon after the arrival, when my sister was sitting in her tent, a friend hurried in to her looking most flustered and put out. He explained that when he was passing the new encampment, one of his dogs had run

up to the waggon to see who the strangers might be. A Kafir servant rushed out and went for the dog, driving it off roughly. The dog's master, being devoted to the animal, resented the treatment he received, and spoke his mind to the native in somewhat forcible language. To his horror, while he was speaking, a lady flew out from behind the waggon and abused him in no measured terms. Her words, indeed, were to the full as warm as any that he had made use of. Feeling it was impossible to meet the lady on equal terms, the Englishman fled to Maggie's tent, whither he had been bound.

As he arrived at this point in his narrative, the flap of the tent was torn open, and in strode the irate lady. My sister's astonishment was great, as, without the faintest acknowledgment of her presence, the stout, middle-aged visitor proceeded to pour out the vials of her wrath on her cornered victim. "How dare he speak to a poor Kafir like that," etc., etc., and she flounced and bounced and held the floor completely, the unhappy man being entirely at a disadvantage. At last my sister, who was getting wrathful at such an invasion of her privacy, broke into the torrent of words with: "Would you kindly remember that this is my tent, and may I ask what you wish from me?" The terrible female ignored the indignant question, but a few minutes later her breath apparently failed her, and without a sign of having observed Maggie, she turned and disappeared in a whirlwind of wrath. The man, who would certainly not have spoken to the Kafir as he did, had he known that a woman was within hearing, had stood dumb before the storm. As he asked plaintively later, "What could he do with a woman?" He always declared that Maggie, by throwing herself into the breach and reaching some dim spot in the lady's angry mind, had saved his life. He was convinced that the irate virago



would have polished him off, had she caught him alone and unprotected.

Another incident that happened while Maggie was in camp at Eshowe was the illness of one of her oxen. One day Hendrick came to her with a long face and asked permission to employ a native who said he could cure the ailing animal. My sister gave her consent, and the driver vanished. When he reappeared, she asked what there was to pay. "Oh, nothing, Inkozikas, he no cure we no pay," answered Hendrick calmly, a simple system that might perhaps be introduced at home with advantage to the patients.

Later on another Zulu vet. was secured, and again Hendrick came to report. This time he was satisfied that the cure had been effectual, for the ox was already better, and he consented that payment should be made. This he asked permission to give in the shape of a good drink out of the castor-oil bottle. The oil had been brought for greasing parts of the waggon, and although considerably astonished at the request, my sister made no objection. Hendrick consequently went off with the bottle to give the Zulu a good drink, and the man went away perfectly happy and satisfied with his fee.

A magistrate who was on his way to his district near the Lebombo Mountains, outspanned for some days near Maggie's camp. As he had a number of young donkeys with him that he was taking up to his magistracy, he was rather a disconcerting neighbour. Whenever Maggie was in conversation with a visitor, at the most interesting point a prolonged bray would come from just outside the tent. It was a matter of speculation among my sister and her friends how it was the wretched donkeys knew the psychological moment at which the weird interruption would come with the greatest effect.

While at Eshowe my sister was taken to pay ceremonial

visits to several of the great Zulu chiefs who lived in the neighbourhood. Among them was Tyingwayo, an enormously stout Zulu, who had been one of Cetewayo's most trusted indunas. He was among the veteran warriors who had directed the attack on our camp at Isandhlwana, and watched the immense impi, which a sign of their hands had set going, hurl itself on to the white invaders of the “Country of the Heavens.” He had fought in early youth under Tshaka, and must have been a very old man when Maggie saw him.

She also visited Matyana, against whose kraal Lord Chelmsford's reconnaissance was made, as well as Sibepu. The latter was one of the thirteen kinglets appointed by Sir Garnet Wolseley at the close of the Zulu war. He ruled his part of the country well, and always remained faithful to the English. When Cetewayo was allowed to return to Zululand, he tried to gain general power over the country once more, but Sibepu would not join him, or have anything to do with the king's party—the Usutu. Cetewayo consequently attacked him, but Sibepu with a much inferior force gained the victory. Some time afterwards Sibepu made a wonderful march of some forty miles by night, and attacked Cetewayo at dawn at his kraal near Ulundi. Here again the younger chief was victorious, and Cetewayo barely escaped with his life. Subsequently Dinizulu and the Usutu party called in the Boers to their assistance, and gained a victory over Sibepu for which their allies made them pay dearly. For their services the Boers claimed the best part of Zululand. They took the Utrecht and Vryheid districts down to Melmoth, and there they proclaimed the New Republic, that was afterwards joined on to the Transvaal.

Maggie had enjoyed the free open-air life of her waggon trip so much that she would gladly have gone further.

She wished to go up into the Lebombo Mountains, which little-known district lies in the N.E. of Zululand. But not only were the Eshowe officials opposed to the idea, but her natives made a firm stand, and refused flatly to go off into unknown wilds. They had no mind to encounter lions and other dangers by the way. The scheme was therefore given up, and wisely, for fever would certainly have finished Maggie's adventures, I should say, ignorant as she was of the proper precautions to be taken against it, and with the rainy season in full swing. Very sorry she was when her pleasant stay at Eshowe came to an end, and it was time for her to be trekking northwards again and resume the ordinary conditions of life.

But time was passing, and Hendrick was anxious to return and attend to his crops, always an important factor in dealing with natives. So orders for departure were given, and with real regret Maggie struck her camp and trekked away from fair Eshowe, on her way back to Rorke's Drift and Dundee. Her road lay near the beautiful hills and forests of the Nkandhla, a country of wooded hills, steep krantzes and rushing rivers. It was in these fastnesses that Bambaata and his men took refuge in 1906, and were finally beaten by Colonel McKenzie's force. An enclosed oval stretch of bush in the distance was pointed out as Cetewayo's grave. The grave itself was hidden in the bush, and no Zulu would go within the oval, as to do so would be against thlonipa.

There was a rather serious alarm of fire on the return journey. During an outspan, Maggie, who was inside the waggon, heard a noise and looked out to find the veld blazing round her. The natives had carelessly set the long dry Tambookie grass near the waggon on fire. A veld fire is an awful thing, and at first it seemed impossible that this should be checked. The men flung themselves

on the flames, and at length succeeded in beating them out with their bare feet and hands. In their fear of the consequences of their want of thought, they were utterly reckless of their own skins.

It is perfectly wonderful how Zulus will stamp out these grass fires, which unchecked will often do terrible damage. They tread with cheerful indifference upon the red-hot twigs and flaming grass and crush out the fire without apparently burning themselves in the least. When possible, of course, they use boughs of trees, but usually there is no time for anything but bare hands and feet to come into play. If it is not stopped at once, no power on earth can stay the devastating course of a veld fire. The only other alarm on the road was the running away of the ox team, and oxen can gallop when they take it into their heads to bolt. No harm came of it, however, except for the voerloeper, whose fault it was. He had a vigorous whacking from the irate driver.

Before the waggon reached Rorke's Drift, Maggie was down with a bad attack of fever, and she was so ill that she much alarmed the friend who rode out to meet her and bring her in. At the Drift she arranged to keep the waggon and staff to take her on to Dundee, and there she caught the coal train and got herself and her baggage started safely for Glencoe Junction. From Glencoe she went down to Maritzburg, where the attack of fever passing off, she spent a few days among old friends, and booked her passage from Durban to Cape Town by the Union R.M.S. *Scot*.

At Cape Town I was staying at the time with our relations, and at the docks our cousins and I were ready to welcome her when the *Scot* came in. We carried the traveller off to Wynberg, and there she and I made plans for the future.



## CHAPTER VIII

### ENTABENE

I WAS so charmed with my sister's account of her experiences in Natal and Zululand, that I also wished to go there. Eshowe I was specially anxious to visit, and we determined to try and get a house there for a few months, as we rather fancied a little housekeeping on our own account in South Africa. We said goodbye therefore to our friends at the Cape, and going round the coast to Durban, we went from there by train to Maritzburg, from which place we hoped to make our arrangements to go on to Eshowe. Our plans for Zululand, however, fell through, for Dinizulu was at that time going back to the country, and the house for which we were in treaty was taken for him by the Natal Government.

Natal presents a smiling picture to the eyes of the travellers who approach by sea, and Durban, with its beautifully wooded bluff, and Berea dotted over with verandaed houses and surrounded by masses of luxuriant flowers and foliage, is most lovely. A friend of ours who knew Durban in the early seventies, and saw it for the last time in 1908, gives me an account of the town both in its earlier and later stages.

"Durban," she says, "now has a large harbour, wharves, and every convenience required for fitting out ships with coal and cargo, but less than fifteen years ago no big ships could come over the bar, and when I first knew the place, passengers had to join them in barges that were battened down and gave a most unpleasant

experience if the weather was rough. In early days, consequently, few vessels called at Durban, and we only received letters once a month, instead of every week. Thanks to Mr. Harry Escombe's scheme for dredging the bar, ships of almost any size can now come in and lie inside the bluff channel, and make use of the floating dock in the bay.

"The whole of the Berea, the large hill that lies at the back of the town, is now covered with good houses, surrounded by lovely gardens and beautiful velvet lawns. Less than thirty years ago the whole of the hill was a mass of tropical vegetation, with sandy paths at intervals, and a few small houses scattered here and there. In those days, too, the roads were of loose sand, in which you sank up to your ankles, but now they are well made and kept in splendid condition. The streets are lighted with electricity, as are most of the houses, and an electric tram service extends for some miles out of the town.

"Natal as a whole is, of course, far more civilised than when I first knew it, but personally I preferred it in its more primitive state. As there were fewer English, everyone knew everyone else, and we were like one large family. Our interests were the same, and the fact of being so much more cut off from England had the effect of throwing us closer together."

My sister and I only passed through Durban, going on to Maritzburg the same day. A single line of railway had by that time taken the place of the post-cart or antiquated omnibus, each drawn by six horses, that used to be the choice of transit. The railway runs through some very wild country, skirting the sides of blood-curdling ravines, and alternately mounting and descending steep hills. The speed of the train is in consequence slow, and the seventy-two miles between Durban and Maritzburg take

three and a half hours by the express, and from one to one and a half hours more by ordinary train. The scenery, however, is so beautiful that travellers who are making the journey for the first time do not complain of the time spent on the way.

The friend from whom I have already quoted has known Maritzburg for as long as Durban, and she tells me that when she first went to the former place it was a tiny town composed chiefly of tin shanties, with only a few brick houses here and there. The streets were unmade, and you could have a gallop right through the town without anyone interfering with you. Buck-hunting was a favourite pursuit with the English residents, and the garrison at Fort Napier kept a pack of foxhounds that took to the sport kindly. The start for the coverts was made before daylight, as the sport began as soon as it was light enough, for directly the sun had power there was little or no scent. The going was bad, for many of the steep hills were covered with boulders or riddled with ant-bear holes. But the horses were wonderfully clever in avoiding pitfalls even when going fast, and they possibly knew where the ant-bears had been by the bunches of fern that nearly always grew by their holes. Fences were unknown, with the exception of sod banks, and you could gallop for miles with nothing to stop you unless it might be a river. Sir Marshall Clarke was Master of the Foxhounds for a long time, and he showed excellent sport. He was a fine but reckless horseman, and in spite of the disadvantage of having only one arm, he managed his horse and the hounds with equal dash.

From the same authority I quote: "Maritzburg is a more English-looking town than Durban, for the tropical vegetation of the latter place gives it a foreign appearance. Maritzburg now has good streets, wide pavements and

electric trams and light. There is a fine Town Hall and Colonial Buildings, and House of Assembly, and the Governor of Natal resides there most of the year. The town is situated on the river Umsindusi, which is pretty in some parts, but close to Maritzburg it runs between high banks, and is rather ugly and muddy. It is a dangerous little river, and after heavy rain rises suddenly to quite an alarming height, so that the bridges have to be built far above the ordinary water level. The rush of the stream occasionally sweeps away whole batches of coolie houses and coolies together. The coolies, who are great gardeners, will build their shanties on low ground because they want water for their vegetables, and loss of life and property never teach the survivors wisdom.

“The houses of the present day are of a very different type to those I first knew. Then a six-roomed house of one floor was looked upon as quite a mansion, but those of them that are still standing look like hovels beside the modern houses with their two stories and wide verandas. The roofs are mostly of corrugated iron, on account of the hailstones that come down with such force that they go clean through ordinary tiles.

“In early days the Kafirs were much more simple in their ways and more trustworthy than they are now. They have become lazy and dishonest, and while a white woman could at one time feel absolutely safe from molestation, even in the most desolate spots, it is not safe now for her to be out of the sight of houses. The rates of living have increased enormously, and whereas ten shillings a month was considered high wages for a cook, house-boy, or outdoor Kafir, and a small boy could be had for two shillings; even the boys now begin at ten shillings. In the old days there were no carriages in Maritzburg, the only vehicles being bullock carts and others of most



primitive make. My sister, Mrs. Clinton Parry, was the first person to introduce a ralli cart.

“It was a common thing then to see the tiger cats come out of the bush on moonlight nights quite close to the town. They used to prowl round the country houses and carry off fowls and anything else they might find about. Snakes, too, were very plentiful, and even in the house you had to be always on your guard against stepping on them. Cats were very clever at killing them, for they would seize the snake by the back of the neck before it had a chance of striking. I have seen a snake lying dead within a foot or two of a cradle where a baby lay asleep, and a cat evidently on guard for fear it should move again and injure the child. That same cat used to kill two or three snakes a day. On several occasions, when walking under trees, I have had the unpleasant experience of a snake dropping almost on my head. It was quite a common thing for Kafirs to be bitten by them, and a great many more whites suffered in the same way than they do now. The Kafirs have their own remedies, and if these can only be applied in time, recovery is almost certain.”

Maritzburg seemed a very pleasant place to me, and on our arrival we put up at the Imperial Hotel, a much smaller building then than it is now. It was a cheerful little place, and there was great diversity among the guests who frequented it. People who lived some distance out of the town used to come in for a few days' amusement. Visitors from Johannesburg and other towns were frequent, and globe-trotters were generally in evidence. The officers from Fort Napier often came in to dinner, and acquaintances were always turning up from some distant parts of the country.

When the negotiations about the house at Eshowe fell

through, my sister and I were rather puzzled what to do, till a lady staying at the hotel offered to let us have her house furnished for a few months. She wanted to get the house off her hands for the rest of her tenancy, as she was about to join her husband at Johannesburg. She accompanied her offer, however, with the warning that she did not think two girls ought to live alone so far out of the town, for Entabene, the place in question, was about three miles from most of our friends' houses, and a mile and a half from the lower end of the town. I drove out with her one afternoon, and fell in love with the beauty of the place at once. When my sister saw it she was as fascinated as I had been, and we accepted the offer of it gaily, in spite of the misgivings of our friends, who disapproved of our being so far away.

The full name of the house, "Mushla Entabene," means "beautiful top of a hill," and my first and last verdict on it was a place to dream one's life away in. The house stood near the top of one of the most beautifully wooded hills that surround Maritzburg, and it lay buried in woods. These woods were a glory of wattle blossoms in the spring, the trees being cut away just in front of the house so as not to interfere with the view. And what a view it was. Right over the valley below, and far, far as the eye could reach over miles of hilly country, with Table Mountain, faint and blue, in the dim distance. The big square window of our drawing-room faced this grand view, and often in the evening I used to watch the great thunderstorms that had passed over us, crashing away on their awful road, the vivid flashes of lightning making the distant mountains stand out sharply in their unearthly glare.

The hill that reached its summit behind Entabene had the effect of making a sort of sounding-board to the road that led to the house. From the open space immediately

behind the building the private road made a sudden dip downwards, and then ran for some distance along the hillside till it joined the main road. When standing at the top of our road I have heard not only horses' feet, but voices so distinctly as to be able to recognise who were the approaching visitors, while yet they were far away. As they drew nearer all sound would cease, and nothing further could be distinguished till the beginning of the sharp ascent was reached. I have sometimes wondered if this peculiarity could have been known to Mr. Bertram Mitford, and given him the idea of a similar sounding-board effect produced by a hill that he introduces into his "Gun-runner."

We started housekeeping by setting up a dogcart—much too high for such a hill as we had to go up and down each time we left the house—and a small five-year-old that rejoiced in the name of "Cherry-picker." He was one of the best horses we ever had in Natal, and his name came from a former horse owned by a man in the Duke of Wellington's, from whom we bought him. The Natal Police kindly provided us with a capital English, smooth-haired terrier, and we took over the pets already on the place, consisting of three goats and a very mixed lot of fowls that only occasionally fulfilled their duty of laying eggs. Our servants consisted of a coolie cook—good old Joseph—a house and stable Zulu, and a small umfaan. They were chosen from different races by the advice of our friends, who said that it was much safer than to have fellow-countrymen, as a coolie and a Zulu would not be likely to join forces in murdering us.

I am sure our fat old Joseph never wanted to murder anyone, if he had he would have chosen Tom, our fine Natal Zulu, who showed a reprehensible liking for the society of Mrs. Joseph. We were, indeed, quite afraid that we might have a tragedy in our kitchen, when we actually

saw Tom's arm steal round the substantial waist of the plain and elderly Mrs. Joseph. This exhibition of affection took place on the back veranda, and presumably our cook was close by in his kitchen. The way the fat old woman smiled upon her youthful admirer was certainly enough to rouse her husband's ire. Our fears seemed well grounded when Tom one day came rushing into the house, crying out in the most joyful tones: "Inkozikas, Cookie he die, Cookie he die!" We hurried out to the wood-and-iron coolie hut, to find Tom jumping about gleefully outside and the old woman also outside doing nothing. Inside the hut poor old Joseph was lying in a fit, but happily he soon came round, and did not seem much the worse for his experience.

The Zulus are very funny in their love affairs. When Joseph and his wife left us for a few weeks, the former's place was taken by a young coolie who had a very young wife. I have rarely seen a prettier girl than she was, with her delicate features and ivory tinted skin, yet to the best of my belief Tom never looked at her. Fearing trouble with the new arrival at the coolie house, we kept an eye on our gay black Lothario, but never once did we see him show the slightest interest in her. I noticed another curious instance of Zulu taste later, when we were at Vryheid. A friend who often stayed with us used to bring a particularly fine, well-set-up Zulu servant with him, who with his height and swagger might well have been irresistible to any Zulu belle. But our own pretty half-caste girl who cooked for us and "bossed" our boys would have nothing to say to him. I was often amused to see Sam languishing in attitudes at the back of our house, and Bessie tossing her head and turning from him to an undersized, slightly lame lad of most unprepossessing appearance, who was our kitchen boy. Later



our friend complained sadly that Sam could not get a native girl, upon whom he had fixed his affection, to marry him. His master being then in an out-of-the-way place took a real interest in Sam's marriage, for he wanted a woman to do his washing, and was quite willing to advance enough money to his boy to buy the necessary number of cows—"lobola"—to give in exchange for the lady. Nothing, however, would induce the obdurate fair one to look at Sam, and for all I know this really fine-looking Zulu may be still condemned to single blessedness.

We had a few small alarms in our lonely house, but nothing that was really serious happened to us, greatly to the surprise of our friends. Soon after we settled in, strange sounds were heard at night coming from the space that lay between the back of the house and the stables, beyond which lay the wooded hillside. We turned out with a lantern to see what might be the cause of the curious breathing sounds and weird rustlings that disturbed us. At last we discovered a herd of cattle established behind the house, and no end of trouble did we have with those beasts before our landlord came to our rescue and fenced us in. The cattle belonged to a former tenant of Entabene, who lived not far off, and the animals who grazed on the open veld outside our grounds would come back to their old home at night. How often we and our boys turned out at night to drive them off, for the noise they made close to our walls prevented us from getting any sleep. All to no purpose, though, for back they would come, and one day when I was ill and my sister busy looking after me, our boys in their zeal overdrove them, and we had to pay damages for their lack of restraint. This really was adding insult to injury and we were thankful indeed when the fencing made us secure from their depredations.

Kafirs do not seem to mind turning out at any hour of the night, and our boys always enjoyed the fun of driving off the cattle. We soon discovered that Tom was fond of wandering about in the moonlight, and several scares he gave us in consequence. One brilliant night, not long after our arrival, my sister was awakened by a step in the back compound. Seizing a heavy stick that she kept by her bedside, and flinging a dressing-gown round her, she slipped out of the house quietly just in time to see a shadow vanishing round the coolie house. Without waiting to call me, she dashed angrily after the supposed burglar, and ran round the hut, only to see the shadow vanishing round the other side. For a couple of minutes or more Maggie and the elusive figure dodged round that coolie hut, the former getting exceedingly angry, when she suddenly came face to face with Tom. He explained to his indignant mistress that he had mistaken her for an enemy, and certainly the boy's astonishment at seeing her was fully equal to her own. She promptly ordered him back to his hut, and retreated to the house with all the dignity she could muster in her airy attire. I watched her return with mingled amusement and relief, for I, too, had been roused and had come out to see what was going on.

One day we had a visit from a party of Tom's "sisters," for all Kafirs are, according to themselves, "bruders" and "sisters," and it probably means that they belong to the same kraal. I was not in when the damsels arrived, but met them departing as I returned from a ride. I fear that I may have stared at the extraordinary party more than good manners would warrant, but, really, there was some excuse for it if I did. There were three or four stalwart Natal Zulu girls, all smiling from ear to ear, and all dressed in some garment of my sister's. I heard later

that Maggie had been turning over some clothes that had lost their freshness during her travels, and when Tom announced that his sisters had come from their kraal to see him, she seized the opportunity of making a present of part of her wardrobe to the delighted "intombis." The one that caught my fancy most was attired in a pale heliotrope tea-gown, that had gone with my sister on her ox-waggon trip, and its effect on its present owner was remarkable. The general effect was a little marred by its not meeting round the young woman's well-developed figure, especially at the waist. But as it was only worn for ornament, this apparently did not matter. The other maidens, dressed with equal disregard to fit and suitability, were equally satisfied with their appearance. A hat set rakishly on a woolly pate, or a low ball dress, all were perfect in their eyes. I received a volley of joyful salutations, as they evidently included me in their gratitude for the wonderful gifts bestowed on them. For the matter of that Zulus are very polite, unless spoilt by foolish familiarity on the part of white people, and their manners are particularly good. Even if Tom's sisters had not been bubbling over with joy, I should have received pleasant smiles, and "Sa bona, Inkoza. Sa bona," from each as I passed. Zulu salutations are very pretty. "Hamba gahle," go in peace, is the farewell to anyone departing, and "Hlala gahle," rest in peace, is the return from the one who is going. Servants, and, indeed, many other Zulus raise the right arm as a salute to their superiors, and say "Inkos" or "Inkosikas" as they do so.

The Zulus have a habit of giving nicknames to white people that are more or less appropriate. It is, as a rule, difficult to find out what names they give, as they are shy about owning to having done so. One friend of ours,

a tall man in a Cavalry Regiment, was known to the Zulus as the "Mushla incomian," or beautiful little cow! Another man had a name that meant a small owl, and a friend found out that my sister's name was "umpingla—pingla," or one who moves from place to place swiftly. This they gave her because in her light ox-waggon she travelled so much more quickly in Zululand, than anyone in the heavily laden buck-waggon to which the natives were accustomed. About Maritzburg I was known as "Lo Incuchlanis," but we failed altogether to find out what it meant. "Lo" means simply "the." At Vryheid we were talking about native names one day, and the magistrate's wife found out from a native girl, who did not know why we wanted the Zulu equivalent, that the word means "quickness." An assistant magistrate, who came up while we were talking, added, "Yes, also a quick temper. I know the word well," which naturally raised a laugh at my expense. My brother-in-law's name meant "the man who killed the Zulus."

Tom was an excellent servant, with but one failing, he would smoke bhang or dacca. It is impossible to stop a native from doing this once he has taken to the habit, for the weed grows all over Natal. It is never wise to keep a boy who is hopelessly under the influence of bhang, for you never know when he may become dangerous. We forgave Tom for his lapses two or three times, and then when he refused to obey a simple order, and was evidently dazed with the drug, we determined to get rid of him. So I rode down into the town, and the chief of the town police kindly came back with me and sent the boy away on the spot.

Entabene belonged originally to Mr. Henderson, C.M.G., who lived in a beautiful place below it, and he had built a house on the upper part of his estate as a residence for his



daughter and his son-in-law, Mr. George Shepstone. Mr. Henderson's place had a most beautiful avenue of feathery bamboos, and his house was literally covered with golden creeper. It was one of the loveliest places I have ever seen, and those feathery bamboos, that were considered, I believe, to be the finest in Natal, were the greatest delight to me. There were masses of poinsettias, too, that made great splashes of vivid scarlet against a background of the wattle trees that were all over the hill.

Our house stood about half a mile away from the main road that ran northwards, and along this road years later I saw the battery go that defended Ladysmith through the siege. It was by this road, too, that our troops went to the Transvaal, to Zululand, to Majuba, and up it Captain George Shepstone, the first tenant of Entabene, must have ridden to his hero's death at Isandhlwana. Mr. Shepstone's nephew, Mr. Sydney Shepstone, once told me that he, too, when a very small boy, rode out with our forces dressed in a tiny Carbineer's uniform. When our troops were clear of the town, Lord Chelmsford first caught sight of the small warrior, and exclaimed to the boy's father who was a member of his staff: "Good heavens, man, you are never going to take that child with you." The next and last thing Mr. Sydney Shepstone remembered of that day, was his sudden longing for his home and mother, and he howled so pitifully that he was sent back promptly, as his father was only waiting for the home-sickness he knew would come, to return him into safety.

Our first evening festivity from Entabene I am not likely to forget. As soon as we had taken possession of the house, rain set in so heavily, that for a day or two we could not even send a Kafir into the town for our letters, for as there was no post out to Entabene, we always had to send in. At last my sister set out in a determined manner

in spite of the downpour, and at the post office found a letter from a friend asking us to waive ceremony—we had not returned her first call—and dine with her and her husband. The letter had been lying at the office, and the dinner was for the very day on which Maggie found the letter. She went immediately in search of her would-be host, and found him at his office in the town. She asked to be excused, as in such weather it was really impossible for us to get out to his house that lay on the other side of Maritzburg. The matter, however, did not turn out to be so simple as she supposed, for it was a bride's first dinner-party, and her husband was so distressed at the thought of our non-appearance, that he assured Maggie she would be inconsolable if we did not go, as we were the only ladies invited. So my sister promised to see if the owner of a livery stable in Maritzburg would undertake to get us out, as to venture in our dogcart was not to be thought of. On her return she told me that she had arranged for us to be driven out, and in due time we started. All went fairly well till we left the town behind us, but when we reached the fairly level road that runs past the Botanical Gardens our troubles began. We had never been to the house for which we were bound, and our driver had only the most remote idea of the way to it. Darkness fell, the road was deep in water and we lurched on our way, we bumped, we stood still, we crawled. At last a light appeared in the distance, and for this we made, without apparently any reference to keeping the road, till at last we all but walked, for our pace at the time was of the slowest, into a barricade of bamboos that served as a gate to a garden. Then our driver shouted, and some kind people, utter strangers, came out to see what had happened. They turned our horses in the right direction, and sent a servant with us to guide our driver to the place we were in

search of. At a terribly late hour we arrived, to find dinner still waiting for us, but it was only a wonder that we had found our way at all.

The return journey was an even worse experience. The rain was still falling in sheets, and the water lay a foot deep on road and the open veld alike. It was not long before we found that we were astray on the veld, and without the slightest idea of the direction in which Maritzburg lay. Our carriage floundered about helplessly, and it seemed as if it must be overturned, and the prospect of being turned out in our thin shoes to walk was far from alluring. Just as we were abandoning all hope, a sound of splashing in the distance reached us, and to the yell of our driver came an answering shout that made our spirits go up with a bound. A man was riding along the road, and came to guide us to it. It was a wonderful piece of luck to find anyone abroad on such a night, and under his guidance we crawled along in a series of lurches, till with a bang we came down at last on the road. The stranger could keep to the track even in the dark, and thanks to him we got back to the town in the small hours, and put up at the Imperial, as our driver declined altogether to attempt to take us further. All things considered, that was certainly an exciting dinner-party.

The road that led up through the grounds at Entabene was a bad one, for it was rough as well as steep, and to add to the possibilities of a mishap a donga ran along the side of it. We had to cross this donga to get to the house, and if the crossing was made exactly at the right spot all went well, but just below it there was a nasty drop of many feet. A friend of ours was once driving a pair of half-broken horses down the hill, when the animals got out of hand, and to check them, the driver pulled them to one side. The horses nearly stopped, then sprang forward, and

carriage, horses, the driver and his groom disappeared from sight in the depths of the donga. A lady who had been in the carriage jumped out when she saw that an accident was inevitable, but they all escaped injury, and the horses being extricated and led down to level ground, the drive was resumed.

My sister and I were once caught in a thunderstorm such as I have only experienced in South Africa. It would have been wiser to stay in the town for the night, but we were anxious to get home, and set off through the storm. Our plucky little horse struggled up our home hill, though I expected him to refuse at every moment, as the storm by this time was appalling. When we reached the crossing over the donga, the water was rushing over the roadway, and coward as I am in a storm, I remember that for once I was thankful for the lightning to cross by. It was pitch dark between the flashes, and I had to calculate on one flash starting us on the crossing, and the next landing us on the other side. Then came half a mile through the woods and at the end a sharp climb, but at last we were landed safe and sound in the open courtyard at the back of our house, to be received by anxious servants who had been much alarmed at our absence. An attack of jaundice was the result of my wetting, and this was not surprising, as I was wearing a linen coat and skirt, and as I was driving, I could do little to protect myself, and when I got down I was soaked as if I had been dipped in a river.

One of the great features of Entabene were the grounds which extended over some fifty acres. They had been most beautifully planned, and vineyards, lemon and orange groves, and a rose garden had been planted among the trees. The luxuriant vegetation of Natal had covered all with a wealth of jungle undergrowth. The rose garden



we used in a most unromantic way as a place for revolver practice. The drive that ran up past the house ended in the open veld, and the paths, that ran in all directions through the woods, were almost invisible. We could wander for hours, and always find fresh beauties springing up before us that we had never discovered before. One day when the owner was thinking of fencing the place, a man came out to look round and give an estimate for the work. I went round the boundaries with him, and it was quite a journey of exploration. At one end, to which I never penetrated before or since that day, we found innumerable spoor of buck.

I did once see a buck standing on the veld above the woods when I was driving home. I had our terrier in the cart with me, and he was as keen as possible for a hunt. Unluckily, though, he was tied up to the seat, and I was alone in the cart, and what with a pulling five-year-old who was close to his stable and evening feed, and a terrier wild with excitement, it must have been a couple of minutes before I could set the dog free. The buck had seen him and had a fair start, but it was a good run all the same. It was very pretty to see the buck as he stood still as a statue on the hill in the evening light, and then directly he caught sight of us, bounding off into the woods before us. The friend from whom I have quoted before, and who knew the colony so much better than I did, says that in the early days at Maritzburg the buck used to eat the vegetables and nibble off the flowers in her garden, but they were so pretty and graceful she could never feel angry with them for their depredations. It is the Kafirs who have destroyed so many of the little creatures, for they generally keep a pack of mongrels in their kraals for the purpose of hunting them.

Another feature of the old days, that I fear has survived

to comparatively recent times, is the gun running to the natives. In many cases this was not done so much for profit as for the sport of the thing. One man, bearing a much-honoured name, had a lively experience when smuggling two brass guns across the Zambesi to a native tribe who were fired with a desire for war. The Portuguese pressed the gun-runners so hard that the guns had to be heaved overboard, and they still lie at the bottom of the broad Zambesi.

Another man was more fortunate in evading the law. When he was smuggling rifles through to the Swazies, he and his companions were trekking over the open veld, when their natives warned them that the Boers were on their track and were coming up rapidly. There was absolutely no cover to be had, but the Englishman, full of resource, set his little party to work, and, digging furiously, they soon made a hole big enough to take the rifles. Into this they were packed carefully and covered up, and on the top they built up a good cooking fire. When the Boers galloped up, certain that they had caught the gun-runners red-handed, they only found a harmless party of Englishmen outspanned after a long trek, and resting comfortably round their camp-fire. The Dutchmen were certain the rifles were there, but in the end had to retire nonplussed.

On another occasion the same man bluffed the Boers with perfect success. He was taking rifles up-country, and when resting at a native kraal was warned that the Boers were after him. Again there seemed no hiding-place available, only quick wit could save the situation. In this case an old native woman was persuaded to help. A bed was improvised in a native hut, and into and under this the rifles were stuffed hastily, and the old woman jumped in on the top and huddled herself up in blankets.

When the Boers came up the Englishman, pistol in hand, rushed into the doorway, shouting that his woman was inside, sick, and no one should go in. The new-comers peered past him as he flourished his weapon threateningly, and seeing that a woman was in bed, thought discretion the better part of valour, and went on to carry their search farther.

We had puff-adders and cobras in the way of snakes at Entabene, and a large python had been killed in the grounds a little while before we went there. There are a good many pythons about Inchanga, half-way between Durban and Maritzburg, and some have been found near the Umsindusi, a few miles from the latter town, though it was not often that they came so near as Entabene. A rather absurd thing happened not long ago with a snake near Maritzburg. A motor was running into the town, when the owner of the car, who was driving, seeing a large cobra lying in the road, stopped and jumped out to kill it. Before he could even attack it, the cobra whisked into the engines, and the man found it impossible to dislodge it. In the end he had to drive on to the town, carrying the little-desired visitor with him, and the aid of a blacksmith had to be invoked before the cobra was killed.

The black mamba is another dangerous snake, and though these are more numerous near the coast, they are still found inland frequently. They are said to be able to travel at a great pace, and they can certainly rear and strike very high. During the late war an officer, who was riding back to camp in Zululand, was bitten above the boot while he was going through thick, long grass. The snake was not seen, but the natives declared they were sure it was a mamba. The Englishman and a fellow-officer were still far from camp, and as the wounded man refused to let his companion suck the wound, he was past all help





DRAWING-ROOM AT ENTABENE.



ENTABENE.





by the time he got in, and died in great agony an hour or two later. More recently a mounted Natal Police trooper was struck at by a mamba, the snake rearing as the man rode past it, but happily striking his saddle-flap instead of his leg. The trooper was successful in killing his assailant. A friend of ours had one of his dogs bitten by a mamba, but by sucking the wound he saved the animal's life. Such widely different views are held about the viciousness of this snake that it seems probable the mamba only makes one of his many unprovoked attacks on human beings when his victim gets between it and its hole.

I was always very much afraid of losing our dogs through snakes; indeed, my first thought, I remember, when a cobra arrived on our veranda one day at tea-time, was to seize our terrier in my arms and fly with him, as if I was as terrified at the snake's appearance, as I am at the raging of a thunderstorm. There is a troublesome little brown snake in the country that is very venomous. Some years ago a little dog belonging to one of our friends was asleep on some bedding in the stable-yard when she suddenly gave a yelp and rushed to her mistress, looking up piteously in her face for help. There was a tiny drop of blood on one paw that spoke of a snake bite, so eau de luce and brandy were given to the dog at once. The poor little thing swelled up terribly, and seemed in such agony that a large dose of morphia was given to it later, and she was put into her bed to die, as everyone believed sadly. The next day, to the astonishment of the household, the sufferer was nearly well, and in a day or two was quite herself again. Yet the snake that had bitten her was found, and proved to be one of those innocent-looking little brown ones. The bushmen, it is said, used to eat the poison gland of snakes to make themselves immune from bites, but whether this is true I cannot say.

Our pet goats at Entabene were both a great trouble and a great amusement to us. We never knew what fresh wickedness they would perpetrate ; but after a few weeks' experience of Shaitan, Goblin and Snow, I quite understood why goats used to be considered the symbol of sin. Shaitan was a big old black goat, Goblin a mischievous-looking little black and white kid, and Snow was his innocent-looking white twin. Shaitan was a hoary old sinner. She pushed up our windows with her horns and jumped on to the beds, where she would be found curled up asleep like a dog. She delighted in getting into our drawing-room, where she sprang about sampling the flowers in the vases, and we would come in to find them lying about the floor with the water flowing about our carpet. Nothing that we could devise would keep her out of the forage room, her ingenuity in breaking open the door was quite diabolical. I once saw the groom holding her with one hand, after one of her exploits, and spanking her well with the other. Shaitan meanwhile bleated indignantly at the chastisement, and Tom, being perfectly serious, looked just like a nurse with a naughty child. If friends brought their dogs or children to see us, Shaitan's one aim was to clear them off as speedily as possible from the place. I have spent an exhausting afternoon in chivying that wretched goat off a terrier who was a favourite visitor of mine. Both her master and I were worn out in her defence. I never decided whether Goblin or Snow was the naughtier of the youngsters. They were both bad, but all three were so amusing in their pranks and so affectionate, that we were fond of them. Often when swinging in a hammock on the veranda, I would see a little head come cautiously round the corner of the house to see whether anyone was about. On seeing me, Goblin or Snow, the usual scouts, would assume the most innocent

of expressions and vanish. If no one was visible, the wicked trio would emerge, rush at a window and be in the house in a second; or they would seize on our pet azalea bushes in front of the house and bite the shoots off, or run round to the side and raid the rose garden. And all the time they knew when they were being naughty as well as if they were children.

Their end was sad, for we were obliged to get rid of them. One day we saw a little procession coming from the house below us, the Hendersons' butler leading Shaitan, and the twins running behind. The man looked indignant, and the goats bleated out that they were misunderstood animals. They had been caught in the act of eating off our neighbour's young shrubs and flowers, for though they had all our jungle to wander over, they had gone and devastated the beautiful gardens below us. That was the last straw, and they had to go. A few nights after they had been led away by their new owner, we heard a scamper of little feet along the veranda. The goats had come back. Many miles the poor little things had travelled to find their way home. They would not be caught that night, but the next day their capture was effected, and they left for the last time.

We were much harassed by bees at Entabene. Not that we minded bees in reason, but those we found had taken up their abode in the wide, open chimney of my sister's bedroom before we went to the house. Probably the former occupant of the room had not required fires, but we were chilly mortals, and we did object to bundles of bees tumbling down into the fire, or sprawling half burnt about the hearth. It was almost as bad as Tshaka putting out fires with the bodies of his soldiers, and as we objected to such Tshaka-like proceedings, we did everything we could to dislodge the bees. We tried in vain to smoke them out.



We tried everything we could think of, but if for a time we got rid of them, they only returned. Not only did they come tumbling down the chimney, but lumps of honey and honeycomb came with them.

As the sweeps of South Africa are the native boys of the household, we set two of them to work to try and get rid of the pest. The operations of these boys are primitive. They arm themselves with a long bamboo pole, on which they tie a "fatuk"—any old rag you give them for the purpose—and then one of them gets on to the roof and pulls at the top of the bamboo, while the other works it from the bottom, and this goes on till the chimney is clean. The houses being mostly of one storey, and few people caring about fires at all in most parts, this primitive method of chimney cleaning is, or was, found quite sufficient. The bees never attacked us unless we accidentally offended them, but they hated our Kafirs. They would assault the house boy without the slightest provocation while he was dusting or waiting at table. "Oh, Inkoza, beeses he bites!" poor Tom used to say, ruefully, when an infuriated bee had flown at him from a corner of the room or through the open window, for they pervaded the whole place. Kafirs' skins are thick, though, and the boys did not seem to mind much.

We had hornets about the verandas of each house we had in Natal, but everyone is so used to their presence that no notice is taken of them, unless you happen accidentally to interfere with one and he retaliates. By white ants we were worried very much once or twice, and they are certainly most objectionable. They have such a nasty way at one time of the year of appearing at dinner time. They are attracted by the lights, and swarm in through the open windows and flop down on the

table. Then they shed their wings and creep all over the place. They burrowed up through our walls, and we waged constant warfare with them, but though we had their nests hunted for and poured paraffin down the runs, we never succeeded in getting rid of them.

The rats were among our early troubles. They were there in numbers when we went up, and though we set traps in all directions and caught many of them, the rest soon got too cunning to share their fate, and laughed at our efforts to exterminate them. We then had no less than eight cats to help in the work of destruction, but when one cat managed to get down among the foundations of the house and we had to spend hours in trying to get her out, we came to the conclusion that they were no good. The rats used to run over my bed at night, and at last they got on my nerves to such an extent that I was always fancying I heard footsteps, and would sit up in fright, grasping the loaded revolver that was always beside me. Once I even slept with it in my hand. As soon as our terrier arrived he proved invaluable in clearing off the rats, and it was not long before we could sleep again in peace. We were once staying in a house in Cape Colony where these scourges were as bad as during our early days at Entabene. My sister was roused from sleep by a rat biting her arm, and it bit her again as she involuntarily flung out her arm to shake it off. Fortunately the wounds healed without giving trouble, but a rat bite is not a pleasant experience.

Our road up to the house was a serious anxiety to me, for during the wet season the violent storms rent away the earth from the steep incline, and laid bare innumerable roots of the trees that lined the road. These were, of course, very dangerous for the horses, and with my road party of one umfaan I used to sally out on many an

afternoon to cut away the roots. Then the storms reduced the crossing over our donga to a shocking state, and I was quite unhappy about it till the good-natured foreman of a road party came to my aid. I was driving home one day when I saw his party at work on the main road, which was strewn with rough stones ; so I drew up and asked the foreman whether they would have the road in a decent state by the following day, as we had people coming out to dine with us. I also said that I was afraid my dogcart would suffer, and I must not bring it out again till the road was finished. The man assured me that all would be in order by the next day, and added, " I am so pleased to find anyone caring about her trap. The people out here " —with a fine British contempt for anything out of England—" don't take any heed of their carts." He recognised me at once as a fellow " home-born," and was so civil that I told him of my trouble about our donga, but said that those repairs would hardly come within the duties of a Government road party. The man, however, ignored this view entirely, and promised to put the donga crossing right, and would, indeed, have attended to the whole length of the drive, only there was a wash-away at a big drift in his district, and he had orders to take his men on as quickly as possible.

The lunatic asylum of Maritzburg being lower down on our hill was the cause of a mild shock I received one hot afternoon. I was resting peacefully in my room, with the blind down, when, hearing a sudden noise outside, I jumped up hurriedly and looked out. To my horror, on the other side of the glass, was a terrible face gazing in at me with unseeing eyes. It turned out to be a harmless lunatic, whose keeper, being an admirer of a white factotum of ours, had brought the poor creature out for a walk through the woods, and left him to amuse himself while he was

engaged in a flirtation with our too fascinating domestic in the kitchen. The many admirers of this woman were a great amusement to us. We tumbled over stalwart dragoons in the stable, on our back veranda, and even in the rooms. Our thrifty servant knew how to make use of the men who came gallantly to escort her down to the town in the evenings. They worked for her, and, to judge by the sounds we heard in the distance, she scolded them in return. She was neither young nor beautiful, but she was an adept in making her friends useful. We often smiled as a little procession vanished down the hill through the gathering darkness. A sharp-featured, bony female, two much-admonished children—the woman was a widow, and her children, being too small to be left alone, always came with her, and were also made useful—and a magnificent dragoon—she favoured the cavalry—clanking along with a tired child in hand or carrying a heavy bundle. The attendant man was always years younger than the woman, and our thoughtful maid used to ask us to get our friends to give their men passes whenever we wanted her to stay after the hour when they ought to be back in camp. She, therefore, wisely distributed her smiles among the men whose officers were friends of ours.

In the days when we were at Maritzburg it was a most pleasant little station, and bright, merry gatherings we used to have at the polo ground, or the park, where cricket matches and sports were brought off, and on the race-course. Fort Napier, that lies just above the civilian town had such uncomfortable quarters for the officers in those days, that many of the men used to take houses in the town, and chum together in parties of twos and threes. Naturally they chose houses as near to the camp as possible, but the supply being limited, some of them lived at a distance. Among the buildings that were near the



Fort was a large Girls' School, and one friend of ours who belonged to the cavalry regiment then stationed there, had a lively experience with the inmates of the schoolhouse. Late one night he and a brother officer were going down to their house in the town, when, as they passed the school, a sudden commotion was heard inside, the front door was flung open, and terrified mistresses and girls flew at the astonished officers and implored them to come to their rescue. A native, a burglar, had been seen in the house. No British soldier could refuse help to distressed damsels, and so in they went, and with gravity equal to the occasion the two brave defenders of our country began a hunt for the burglar. In every room they searched, under beds, in cupboards, and every likely or unlikely place in which the miscreant could have hidden himself, the terrified house party assisting in various stages of elementary attire. Most conscientiously the two men did their work, and after prodding in every hole and corner without finding anything to give a dramatic finale, they at last left the scene of action, having persuaded the ladies that no burglar was there.

Among the performances at the modest theatre, the amateur ones were on the whole the most amusing. One night, when everyone was assembled in the green room, after the performance was over, a native who brought in a large bouquet caused much amusement. He advanced solemnly to a large, handsome woman who had been one of the performers, and presenting the flowers to her, announced: "For the Mafoota (fat) lady." Another incident remains fixed in my memory. We were leaving the theatre after a play by amateurs, in which some dances had found a place, when we were electrified by hearing a loud voice, lost in the darkness, exclaim: "Not a decent pair of legs among the lot, except Mrs.—'s." The

voice was that of a well-known senior officer, and there was a sudden hush of half-horror, half-amusement over the departing guests, as we all glanced round to see how many of the lady's relatives and friends might be within hearing. Yet the verdict was undeniably right!

## CHAPTER IX

### BEFORE THE STORM

WE were very sorry when the time came for us to leave beautiful Entabene, and the pleasant times we had had there came to an end. The wealth of loveliness there was in the woods all round the house is still a pleasure to think of. The wattle trees and the acacias made a perfect rain of blossoms and delicious scents, and low down on the hill, about a mile distant from the house, was a line of syringas, as they were called, but they were not the same as the syringa we know at home. The blossoms were purple, and had a scent that was too strong to be pleasant at close quarters, but as it came through the air at a little distance was delightfully sweet. On these trees were innumerable circalas, and the curious thrumming noise made by the insects and the sweet penetrating scent of the trees are always woven in my mind with the ride or drive home on summer evenings through the valley.

However, we had to say good-bye to it all, and my sister went straight home to England, where I followed her after a round of visits to our relations in the country. Six months later we both came out again, and my sister married Thomas Bruce Steer—the Tim of this narrative—and we all settled at Ravenshoe, a nice house standing on a hill outside Maritzburg. During the whole of our second stay in Natal, ill-feeling between the Boers and the English was simmering. There were several war scares, and though the crisis passed, we knew there was danger below the surface. On one occasion the Natal



CHURCH PARADE.





Police were quietly concentrated near the border, native unrest being the ostensible reason of their being massed. I forget exactly where they were stationed, but I do remember that the neighbouring residents complained to headquarters that the members of the Police did not attend church on Sundays, which they considered very unseemly behaviour. A warning was consequently sent to the camp that if more men did not appear in the local church, they should have church parade every Sunday. That was enough, and there were no more complaints of Natal Police laxity.

Things looked so ominous at one time that a regiment was ordered from India in such a hurry that most of its baggage had to be left behind. The officers and men consequently arrived in their service kits prepared for immediate action, and were bitterly disappointed when they found that matters had already cooled down. They had not very long to wait though, before they won undying fame as part of our splendid Irish Brigade. The garrison in Natal was largely increased before we left Maritzburg at the end of fifteen months.

Ravenshoe was not situated among woods like Entabene, but it had large grounds, so large indeed that we never attempted to keep them up properly. As we had only one outside boy, it was all he could do to keep the grounds in front of and close to the house in order. There were acres behind where we seldom penetrated, for ticks abounded in the long grass, and I repented sadly when I once visited our next neighbours on foot through this jungle. For the future I preferred to ride by the longer way, as this tick and thorn infested short cut had very decided disadvantages. The lawn in front with its flower beds and the high wattle trees round was very pretty, but not to be compared in beauty to our former house. Our flower ·

garden, however, was very bright and the roses were our joy. The old-fashioned sweet smelling rose bushes were a relic of the reign of a former tenant of the place, and three of them that were my special favourites covered as much space as an ordinary small room, and after a night's rain they were a glory indescribable, one mass of sweet scented golden beauty. All that flowers want in Natal is water, and during a dry season, when no thunderstorms relieved the heat of summer, my bath water was divided every day between the roses and our veranda garden. Here we had begonias, ferns, and arum lilies, that all grew in profusion, a tecoma too, with its delicate pink flowers and graceful leaves, and a cactus climbed over one of my bedroom windows. I always knew when a great creamy cactus flower had burst into bloom, by the sweet scent that floated in through the window when I woke in the morning. Just opposite that window was a moonflower, the datura of India, whose white trumpet flowers smell so exquisitely at night. I am very fond of "the flower of death," and we had plenty of them both at Entabene and Ravenshoe. We had indeed a wealth of flowers at the latter place, the red lilies that seem to need no water, and flower throughout the dry season, as well as tuberose, were there in quantities. A curiosity among flowers that I once saw—and smelt—in the Cape suburbs, was one of those awful carnivorous lilies that grow in Central Africa. I have an idea that the root of this particular horror came from some part of Rhodesia. It was in shape rather like an arum, but grew on a short stalk, and was coloured a deep tawny yellow, streaked with red. I never saw anything so repulsive among the beauties of Nature, it was loathsome to the eye, and worse still to the nose. I retreated after one glance at it, for I felt as if the thing must be alive, it looked so cruel. I could not

imagine how the acquaintances who took me to see their strange possession, could let anything so vile contaminate their beautiful wood. They had, however, been wise in planting it at some distance from the house.

Not only the roses, but the capital stabling we had at Ravenshoe, came to us from General Tucker—now General Sir Charles Tucker, K.C.B.—who had lived there before we took the place. It was there we had Scamp, the pony that among my many stable friends has always stood first in my affection. He was really a joint possession of my sister and myself, but as Maggie only rode him once or twice, and he declined to go in harness, I had him practically to myself. He was my choice, and I think he knew it, for his devotion to me was as great as my affection for him. When we bought him he was a five-year-old, and I think his knowledge of a habit was *nil*, but he took kindly to it, and once he was used to my weight, he would shut up promptly if a man mounted him. Yet he was strong enough to carry anything in reason; he stood 14'1" without his shoes, was brown-black in colour, and always in splendid condition. I was certainly proud of him, and I delighted in his intelligence and fidelity. He would soon follow me about anywhere, and when I rode him into the town and dismounted to do some shopping, there was no need for me to look after him. I just left the reins on his neck, and knew he would always be close to me, and I have often seen a smile on strangers' faces, as they watched the pony gravely threading the often crowded main street of Maritzburg in my wake. Very often when I had only a little business to transact, Scamp and I did it together, and we would ride over the pavement and in at the open door of the shop. Directly Scamp's dark head appeared in the doorway, someone would always fly to serve me, and I would then rein him back into the street.



Scamp never made a mistake, he might have been on parade, he backed so steadily. This method of shopping was quite against the law, but no policeman was ever unkind enough to remonstrate, and people on the pavement were too much amused at his performance to mind, and always received my apologies with a smile if we happened to get in their way.

Scamp's likes and dislikes were most pronounced. A full-blown commanding officer he would tolerate, even sometimes allow to lead him if he had a bridle on, but no subaltern would he stand, and if loose, no one but myself might touch him. It used to be one of our amusements in the afternoon to stroll round to the stables and watch Scamp's behaviour when a subaltern went into his loose box. He always tucked himself up behind me, put his muzzle on my shoulder, and from that vantage ground glared at the invader. He was as eager as a dog about his daily outing, and was terribly low-spirited if a gathering thunderstorm drove us back before we had gone as far as usual. There was nothing that pony enjoyed so much as a cricket afternoon. Sports and polo he liked, but his delight in watching cricket was unmistakable. When I have ridden to the cricket ground, I have often left the reins loose just to see what Scamp would do. First he would feel the bit gently and sidle nearer to the ground, then, if still left to his own devices he would walk up to the edge of the ground, and stand as still as a statue proudly facing the players. Once a ball hit his head and also struck the O.C. of one of the regiments that were playing, but Scamp behaved perfectly, and was as indifferent to the assault as the officer.

Scamp's love of cricket once saved me from a "dust devil." and gave me a good laugh. I had ridden down one morning to see the beginning of a match, as I could

not go later in the day, and after a brief stay I turned reluctantly away. The pony knew that I was only half-hearted about my departure, so he pulled up gently, and as I did not take any notice, he turned round and insinuated himself once more in his old position. As we moved back, a little whirling "dust devil" swept across behind us, and passed over the edge of the grass on to the bare earth of the cricket ground, for cricket, like polo and most other sports, does not take place on grass in Natal. A little storm, a mere baby, gave a sudden shriek and flew up in the air, whirling round and round in spiral formation, and at the same time the "dust devil" rushed forward and was on the pitch in a second. Everything loose belonging to the men was torn off and whirled upwards in circles, and one batsman who was facing me stood still in astonishment gazing up at his cap that was circling upwards and upwards far above his bare head. Then, with more fiendish shrieks, the "dust devil" waltzed off to the opposite wicket, and up went everything it could lift as it passed along. Luckily there were few people on the ground at that early hour, but on the far side were a few ponies that belonged to the players, in care of the syces. The boys simply flew from the threatened danger, dragging their charges after them. The "devil," having danced from one end of the pitch to the other, rushed forward once more and vanished in the distance with a roaring, screaming noise.

Scamp had a very reprehensible trick of "pig-jumping." This is, I fear, another colonialism, and is something between plunging and buck-jumping. It was perfectly easy to keep my seat, but I often felt that just a little more might do for me. He first gave a warning wriggle of his strong back, and always chose the most public places to play up in. He was, in fact, the vainest pony

I have ever known, and though he would behave like a meek sheep on a quiet road, pig-jump he would if there were people and horses about to admire his performance. How often I have felt an utter fool as I tried desperately to quiet my tiresome pony and carry on a conversation at the same time, as we were coming away from cricket or polo. It would be: "Good evening, a capital afternoon was it not?" aloud, and under my breath: "Steady, steady boy. I will never forgive you if you put me down here!" My brother-in-law would roar with laughter when a tussle began as we were riding together, and exclaim: "I can't do anything," and indeed no one could.

One morning I took Scamp out to watch the mounted infantry of one of the regiments stationed at Fort Napier. The pony was in the highest spirits. He preferred it even to a review, was most anxious to join in, and I had the greatest difficulty in preventing him from falling in with the men. The morning, however, was a great disappointment. I had got up early to see the manœuvres, because the officer who was shaping the newly-started mounted company had promised me an amusing time. On their first field day, seventy of his men had been dismounted within a few minutes, and he said it was a sight worth seeing. When I went out only a very short time later, not one saddle was emptied, which was uninteresting, but spoke well for the officers.

A funny little incident took place in connection with Scamp. When he first came to us, he stood in the main stable, a stone building with stalls, but no loose box. The big doors always stood open during the day, and I often noticed a chicken about Scamp's stall. As the chicken did not belong to us, I concluded that it came from our next neighbour's place and was attracted by

the mealies, a box of which stood in the broad alley way. So I hardly noticed the little thing till one day Scamp took fright at a touch from his native groom and plunged violently. It was some minutes before I could quiet him, and all the time I saw the chick hopping about between his legs. I wondered at its not being frightened, as Scamp was rearing, kicking, and flinging himself from side to side in a fury, and from that time I watched it. I never once saw it at the mealie box, but always in close attendance on the pony. Not long after Scamp was moved to the loose boxes behind the big stable, for as the weather was very dry and his feet were naturally hard I feared laminitis, and thought that an earth floor would be better for him than the stone floor in his stall. The following morning when I went to see the pony, I found a poor fluttering chicken trying in vain to get to its friend. The half-door of the box had to be kept shut, and it was too high for the little thing to flutter over. The mealie box stood where it had always been, but the chicken never went back to the big stable. It fluttered pitifully round Scamp's new abode, till at last it vanished, and I never traced its fate. It seemed as if the pony had a great attraction for other animals. One night when going my usual stable rounds, I looked through the window of the loose box, and turning the light of the lantern gently on him to see that all was well, I saw a rat comfortably ensconced on his back. Very funny the animals looked. Scamp, as was his custom, was lying down curled up almost like a dog and cuddled into his blanket, and on this lay the big rat. My voice speaking to the pony and the light of the lantern sent the rat off, but it was evident that Scamp did not object to its presence.

It was a terrible wrench to part with the pony when



we left, and no horse has ever taken his place to me. When my sister went back to Maritzburg during the war, she tried to trace him, and at first feared that he had gone to Ladysmith and was there during the siege. From what she learned later this did not seem probable, but we never knew what happened to him after he was sold by the O.C. of the Natal Police, who bought him from us.

Another pony that we had at Ravenshoe was, I believe, a pure-bred Basuto. In colour he was a sort of dun, quite remarkably ugly, but if "a rum 'un to look at," he was unquestionably "a good 'un to go." Dick had won several trotting-matches, and used to fly along at a pace that left many better looking, bigger animals far behind. He stood under fourteen hands, but could carry a heavy man on a long journey, day after day, without being any the worse for it. He had influenza rather badly some months after we bought him, and the feeding up he had during that time and the long rest, made him take to jibbing when he was again put into harness. Nothing that I could do would cure him, and after endless trouble with him, and a final tussle that lasted half an hour before I could persuade him to behave himself, I refused to drive him again. As everyone else had been tired of his pranks long before, we sold him.

The Basuto ponies are wonderfully strong, enduring animals, and all that I have known have been good. One of them that belonged to a friend was a great pet of mine. He had a most extraordinary way of getting out of his bridle whenever he was fastened up. However well he was tied up in our stable, he was always found loose when his master was going away.

An officer in the Natal Carbineers had a favourite horse named Tommie, that he took with him to Ladysmith during the war, and quite early in the siege Tommie

saved his master's life. Two officers, of whom Tommie's master was the senior, rode out of the town to reconnoitre. The junior man was left at the foot of a hill with the horses, while the senior climbed up it. On reaching the top he found that the enemy were in force on the other side, and as they had seen him, they came over the brow and fired at him as he was making his way down. He reached the bottom untouched by the bullets, only to find that Tommie had broken loose and was galloping wildly about the veld. Directly the horse saw his master he stopped, and when called trotted up, and disregarding the firing that was now fast and furious, he allowed himself to be mounted and galloped back to the town in safety.

That horse went through the siege gaily, though I regret to say that his master was killed in a sortie during its course. Tommie was a remarkably intelligent animal and a born campaigner, for he took excellent care of himself. He always kept fat, which feat he managed by looting the other horses' food unscrupulously. He would eat his neighbour's forage before turning his attention to his own, and none of the sufferers dared interfere. When the siege was over and the poor scarecrows of horses who survived marched out of the town, Tommie pranced out as sleek and fat as when he went in. Alas! he died from horse-sickness some time later.

It is strange that Natal, which on the whole is such a healthy country for Europeans, is such a bad place for animals. Among the natives, too, consumption is very prevalent, though few white people contract the disease. Horses are particularly subject to fatal illnesses, the worst of which is the dreaded horse-sickness, that carries off numbers every year. So far no cure has been found for it, though after many years of close investigation it is

attributed to the bite of a mosquito of a very poisonous sort. This brings on a kind of blood poisoning, by which the lungs are specially affected. A horse may be apparently well only an hour or two before his death. He flags suddenly and drops down, and just before the last he seems to be in great pain and draws his breath with difficulty.

Though we were fortunate in escaping horse-sickness in our stables, we had a good deal of influenza, which often proves fatal. High fever, and sometimes pleurisy, mark the course of the disease, and one year we had two horses of our own down with it, and one belonging to Sir John Dartnell, at the same time. A terribly cold rain lasted for several days while the horses were ill, and as we had a house full at the time, and every blanket was in use, I was at my wits' end to find extra coverings for the sufferers. The supply of horse-cloths is limited in a country where extremes of cold are rare, so everything in the shape of a wrap that I could get hold of went to the horses. At last, when everything else was exhausted, I tied a pale blue flannel dressing-gown, adorned with lace, round my favourite Scamp's throat and chest. This garment so enraptured our Zulu stable boy that he begged for the reversion of it as soon as Scamp could do without a chest protector. I gave the boy the dressing-gown, but I do wonder what use he made of it.

I noticed that influenza attacked horses in as many different ways as it does human beings. We used to feed the horses up, keep them warm and quiet, and watch over them constantly. A friend who has had much experience says: "At certain times of the year, chiefly after a bad rainy season, horses have to be taken almost as much care of in Natal as a new-born infant. At other seasons they are extremely hardy. Mules are subject to the sickness, though they recover oftener, but donkeys, I believe, are

immune." Another friend who breeds horses in Natal attributes their liability to disease to the lack of lime in the soil, and to the fact of the colts being worked too young.

Difficult as it is to rear well-bred dogs in Natal, dog-lovers have as many of their favourites as we do at home, and the colonial dog is just as dear and intelligent as are his home cousins. Mrs. Taunton's Aberdeens were well known in Maritzburg, and very sad was the fate of her last pet, little Laddie, who died of a broken heart after parting from his mistress when she left Natal. The little thing had been ill, but was on the high road to recovery, and a kind home having been offered for him, his new mistress came and carried him lovingly away. Weakened as he was by illness, the shock of the parting was too much for him, and he died on his way to his new home. Laddie was buried in the garden that was to have been his to roam over and play in, and his grave became the great object of attention and care to the children of the house. Even his mourning mistress could hardly help smiling, when she was told of the children's delight at having a grave of their own. Some little friends of theirs had a pet's grave in their garden that they decorated with flowers and tended assiduously, and now poor little Laddie was to be cared for in the same way. His grave was smothered in flowers, and he was still as great a source of joy to his owners as he had been in life. Laddie and his companions were wonderfully clever little things, and as their mistress objected to their making a noise when she was talking to friends, they learned to walk noiselessly about when strangers were present, so as to make no disturbance.

A friend who is now in Natal has a small dog, who when winter is coming on and she feels cold, always gets into the empty grate, as a strong hint of her wishes. The owners of this dog when they went to England left their



pet with a neighbour who lived some miles away from their place. When they came back a Kafir was sent with a note asking for the dog's return. The small creature, however, did not wait to be sent, but rushed off by herself and tore home. She had never attempted to go there before, so that she must have connected the advent of the Kafir with her owner's presence, and off she went to give and receive a hearty welcome.

There is an immense difference between the natives of the Cape Colony and Natal. About Cape Town the descendants of the old slaves, who often have Dutch blood in them, make clever, quick-witted servants, but almost the first true Cape Colony natives that I knew as household servants were the Hottentots in the Middleburg district. They are yellowy, wizened-up looking creatures, and are the nearest approach to the bushmen that I have seen. They are easy to teach and quick to pick up white ways, but I never liked them, for they gave me the impression of being dirty and untrustworthy. In the Queenstown district there are the Kafirs of the country and Fingoes, these being Zulus who fled from their own land in the days of Tshaka. They seemed rather stupid, and cannot be trusted with work that requires skill.

In Natal the natives are Zulus who also took refuge there from Tshaka, and though they are inferior to the true Zulu, they often make excellent servants. Teddy, our cook at Ravenshoe, was a very good one, and was fidelity itself. He stayed with us till we left for England, and always said that he was only waiting till we came back to Maritzburg. Teddy could have had much higher wages than we gave him, if he had gone into the town, and three times as much at Johannesburg. He was a Christian, which proves that some of the missionary boys turn out well, but he was a true Kafir in some of his dark ways. One day he asked

if he might have his little boy, aged about six, in from his kraal to live with him and go to school. Permission was given, as a small "umfaan" makes very little difference in a household, and Darly arrived duly. The quaintest possible little figure he was, too, trotting about at his father's heels. He was always busy about something under Teddy's direction, and with a smile at the roundabout ways of natives, we understood that Darly's school was a polite fiction. So it was ignored, but my sister remarked casually to Teddy that Darly was so useful, he must have regular wages and be dressed like the other boys in white cotton shirt and knickers trimmed with red braid.

So Darly became a recognised member of the household, as he would have been from the first had Teddy asked. He was a wonderful child, for though he looked such a baby, he behaved perfectly. He laid the table, waited, held horses, and was always grave and dignified, and afforded the utmost amusement to us and our friends. The small creature's presence of mind was extraordinary. One evening when I was on the veranda, a little before dinner, I saw through the French window of the dining-room a sudden flare up. I flew from the far end where I was standing, and was in at the open window in a second. But already the danger was over. Darly, who had caught the lamp in the tablecloth as he was laying the table, must have blown out the flaming wick almost as it fell, and when I arrived he was calmly putting out the oil that had caught fire, and was running in little flames over the white cloth, with his tiny black fingers. All was over before I could get to the table, and so quickly had the fire been put out that no injury was done to the cloth. Yet from the blaze that I saw, the whole room might have been in flames.

The O.C. of the Dublin Fusiliers, who often came to the

house, used to ride up on a great black waler, a splendid charger that he had brought from India. This horse was Darly's great admiration, and somehow or other the little fellow always used to hold him. It was no use to tell the big outdoor lad to take the horse; sooner or later Darly would get the post he coveted, and we would see him proudly leading the animal up and down. He would change with one of the other boys, the elder being reduced to the charge of some pony.

I have an idea that Zulus admire specially black or very dark horses, for Scamp was a great object of admiration to them. The other natives are the same, and when I was riding through the town, the children, and sometimes men, would say to me, "Lo mushla harsh, Inkosa," the pretty horse, lady. I have often had to ride quietly past, as the tiny children would tumble about in the sand, looking up with interest at Scamp, and quite regardless of danger from his heels. The coolie quarters run for quite a mile up the lower part of the slope upon which Maritzburg stands. Within that mile you could imagine yourself to be in an Indian bazaar, for even the smell was the same, as I was told one evening when we rode through, by a man who had just come from India. Mingled curry, joss-sticks, and all the other scents that are associated with the Indian bazaar. From Ravenshoe we had to go through this quarter to get to the town and to the camp above, so that we knew the part well.

I often used to watch the gold and silver workers with their tiny braziers, sitting at their work before their low houses. One day I passed a fakir, who gazed at me with eyes dazed with drugs, and with open hatred in his glance. Such a weird figure he was, with a long beard, a loin cloth for clothes, and old, emaciated and dirty beyond description. On another occasion I met my brother-in-law

coming out of the town as I was going in, and he told me cheerfully that I had just missed a murder and an exciting pursuit of the murderer. A coolie had shot another of his class, and getting on the roof of a house he had tried to keep the police at bay with his revolver. As his capture had been effected half an hour earlier, I only just missed the lively scene. Since we returned home, a lady whom we knew well, has been murdered by her coolie cook. The man threatened a Zulu girl, who fled to her mistress in the dining-room. The plucky lady sprang at once between the girl and her pursuer, and the man stabbed her to death as she defended her maid.

The Mahommedans and Hindus had separate quarters allotted to them, as the rows that took place between them were constant, and the Hindus were obliged to keep their religious processions below the line that divided their dwellings from those of the Mahommedans. The Hindus are chiefly Tamils who come from the congested districts in India, and the Mahommedans are, I believe, mostly Arabs. The Natal Government has for years brought in indentured Indians, and though they can return home at the end of three years, they very often prefer to remain where they can get high wages either in trade or domestic service. They have the market-gardening and a good deal of other trade in their hands. Indeed, for a long time there has been a strong feeling among the colonists against the indentured Indians, because they undersell the white traders, for the Indians of course can live far more cheaply than the Europeans. The former were brought in originally to work the tea, coffee and sugar plantations that lie within the sub-tropical belt that is near the coast. There the climate is of a damp warmth that is trying to Europeans, but the farther you go up country, the drier and cooler it becomes.



The Zulus are not fond of work, and as their requirements are few, there is little need for them to exert themselves. A Kafir only wants money enough to pay his hut-tax and buy a wife who will work for him, tending his mealie patch, fetching water, and save him from all exertion. As soon as his boys are old enough—and they begin ridiculously young—they are sent into the town, and the father takes most of their wages as long as they are youngsters. So the coolies fill the gap in the labour market. They cost their employers about 30s. a month, which sum goes partly to the coolie, partly to the Government to pay for importing him, and the rest for medical treatment in case he should be ill. Sometimes the coolies bolt, but their employers have to pay the Government all the same. When we were at Maritzburg good coolies, after they had served their three years, could get from £2 to £3 a month, and some of them up to £7. The coolies had rations that cost about 15s. a month, and it was the custom to give the Zulus sixpence and the umfaans three pence a week as a present to buy meat with. Good Kafirs earned about the same as the coolies, and rough Kafir men were paid at the rate of £1 a month. Superior house servants wore white cotton suits, and the ordinary Kafirs white shirts and knickers edged with blue or scarlet braid, and very well they all looked. The quantity of soap that our servants used in washing their clothes was prodigious. Pounds of it they required.

I was interested in a Hindu temple that stood far down in the valley, among thick groves of trees. One day as I was riding past I thought I would go and see it, so I rode into the compound, slipped from my pony, and interviewed the priest who came forward to receive me. He was a young man, with the clear-cut features of the high caste Asiatic, and somehow I knew from his curious smile,

as he talked about his gods, that at heart he was an atheist. The temple door was open, and standing on the plinth I looked into its shadowy depths, but there was a difficulty about my going farther. Not on the part of the obliging priest, who was quite ready to show me over, but I did not like leaving Scamp alone with the small acolyte who had come forward to hold him, and I had an idea that no woman ought to invade a Hindu temple, especially in boots. It was too absurd to think of sitting down and pulling off my long riding-boots, so I only looked inside, and could just make out a large image of Buddha—I presume from his inscrutable smile—and a row of little lights and tiny plates of offerings before him. When I declined to go in, the priest smiled and answered—he spoke very good English—that if I would not go in the gods should come out to me, which was really very accommodating of them. So out they came, not Buddha, but Krishna and many others, for, as far as I could make out, Buddha and the Hindu gods shared the temple amicably. When Krishna was held up to me, the priest showed more animation than he did over any of the other gods. He swelled with pride as he said: “This is Krishna, he was made in Birmingham!” I had the greatest difficulty in keeping grave, while I admired the exceedingly commonplace representation of the god. The next day I brought a gold ornament and presented it either to Buddha or Krishna, I forget which. After all there is something pathetic in these poor natives of India bringing their gods and setting them up in an alien land. They are naturally only pariahs, except perhaps the priests, who certainly looked to be high-caste men. I do not know whether priests can cross the water without losing caste, but I know that I laughed kindly to myself over the queer mixture of Buddhism and Hinduism in that temple.

As far as I know I was the only English visitor the little place ever had, and the last time that I spent a few days in Maritzburg, when on my way to England, I could not find my temple, though I rode out to look for it.

One evening Tim and I rode past it when a great festival was going on. I can see the maddened Hindus now as they whirled about the road, beating their tom-toms, and dancing wild dances all round our ponies. Luckily both Punch and Dick, one a country-bred and the other a Basuto, were perfectly steady, and we rode very slowly and quietly through the excited crowd. Apparently the men were frenzied with drugs, but they showed us no animosity, it was only religious excitement that made them throng about us. The road was usually a very quiet one, and when we had passed through the crowd, it was curious to ride along the peaceful track with fireflies dancing on either side, and look back at the flashing crescent lights, the torches gleaming upon the maddened figures, and listen to the shouts and the tom-toms that were being beaten furiously. Often in the quiet evenings at Raven-shoe I would listen to the slow beat of the tom-tom, that most persistent of all sounds, as it floated up from the valley below, but only that once have I heard them beaten like war-drums.

Another sound that I always associate with those evenings was the Kafirs talking to each other from hill to hill. Their voices would hardly be raised, but clear and penetrating they would sound through the still air of the summer evenings, and then the answer, just as effortless and just as soft, from far, far away. The natives' extraordinary power of passing on news has often puzzled even those who live among them. The swiftness with which it is called from mountain to mountain is almost incredible. This is

often shown on shooting expeditions in different parts of the country. The long-drawn cry of a native will come floating through the air from the far distance, and every native in the camp will immediately pay the closest attention to the sound. From some hidden kraal nearer at hand the cry will be taken up, and though the sound is still too distant to convey any exact meaning to the European, the practised ears of the natives will soon catch its import. It may be that cattle have been carried off by some marauding beast of prey, and the natives of the neighbouring kraals, as well as the European guns, are being asked to join forces in its capture. By the same wild signals the meeting-place is arranged, and an excited crowd of natives is soon gathered.

If the assembled warriors should be Zulus, an impressive little ceremony will precede the dangers of the coming chase. At least I cannot say if this is always the case, but when Sub-Inspector Lewis was starting last year (1908) on a lion hunt in the Vryheid district, he witnessed a remarkable scene. An impi of about 120 Zulus had assembled, and all were in war-dress, armed with assegais and carrying their large war-shields. Before they moved off, the Zulus formed a circle, and, to quote Inspector Lewis's words, "stood reverently while one of their leaders offered up a prayer to the 'Nkulunkulu,'<sup>1</sup> asking for protection and success in hunting the 'izilwana' '<sup>2</sup> who had eaten up their cattle, at the conclusion of which the assembly united in a deep-voiced, fervent 'Amen.' Then an old Kehla<sup>3</sup> . . . stepped out, and, in an impassioned address, exhorted them all to deeds of daring, by reminding them of what their fathers had done in days gone by . . .

<sup>1</sup> Nkulunkulu = Great Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> Izilwana = lion.

<sup>3</sup> Kehla = a warrior who has won his spurs.



then, turning to the chief, he said, 'Now we are ready. Give us your orders and they will be obeyed.'"

When General Dartnell and a party were out after buck in the Ubombo, the Zulu chief Sibepu brought word to the shooting-camp that four lions had been seen in the neighbourhood. Would the Englishmen go after them? Only too keen to have a shot at the royal beasts, the members of the little party hurried off to the spot, where Sibepu had got together several hundred of his men, all of whom were armed with guns and assegais.

The sequel proved to be more exciting than the Englishmen had anticipated, the friendly but too zealous natives causing them more danger than the lions. The latter had been located in a patch of bushy, scrubby ground facing a donga, and round three sides of this the native warriors were stationed, while the English party took up their position along the edge of the donga, thus completely surrounding the lions. The three lines of natives were to drive the lions down to the white guns, but in the ardour of the moment they forgot their work as beaters, and entered with the wildest enthusiasm into the fray.

No sooner was the signal to advance given, than, with a rush and a roar, the Zulus flung themselves into the bush, firing off their guns wildly in all directions, and throwing their assegais in showers. The position of the Englishmen was far more dangerous than in a battle, General Dartnell declared, and they could only throw themselves flat on the ground behind some loose stones that luckily fringed the edge of the donga, and at the risk of their lives from the too energetic beaters, raise themselves to take occasional shots at the lions when they appeared.

The Zulus had pressed up regardless of danger, and when the bag was counted, three lions and one Zulu lay dead, and there were many wounded warriors on the ground.

The dead man was pointed out to Sibepu, but the chief remarked philosophically that the man had met a warrior's death and it was all right ! The body was covered with his shield by his comrades and an assegai laid by his side, and he was left in his resting-place in the bush when the party turned their steps homewards.

The fourth lion escaped, as the shooting expedition had only been snatched while General Dartnell was awaiting orders from headquarters, and in obedience to these he and his party had to return at once to Maritzburg.

In Northern Natal and Zululand there is still some game to be found worth going after. In the low veld towards the Ubombo, some 70 or 80 miles from Vryheid, there are waterbuck, wildebeest, impala, hippo on the Pongola river, and lions near the Rooi Rand. Two years ago a small troop of zebras from Zululand visited the Black Umfolosi Valley, and one of them was captured near Waterfall, about 23 miles from Vryheid. It proved rather a difficult prisoner to manage, but at last was hitched on to a quiet horse and run into Waterfall, and on to Vryheid the following day. The Natal Police kept it at their headquarters as a pet, but unfortunately it strayed, and was killed and eaten by natives. There is excellent fishing in some parts of Natal and Zululand. Trout that were introduced from England some years ago by a local sportsman give good sport in the Dargle, and the Umgeni and Bushman's rivers are fully stocked, and have barbel that run up to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. There are also a few of the latter in the Tugela.

From the great battlefield that South-Eastern Africa has been for so long, many stirring tales of tragic import have come down to us. Was it not Livingstone who said "that Africa must be bought with the price of souls" ? She has at least been bought with the price of blood, for her story has been one of incessant warfare. When my sister was

passing through Stangar by post-cart, the place was pointed out to her as being on the site of Duguya, and by it the oval patch of bush that hides the grave of Tshaka, who once reigned over South Natal and Zululand. Tshaka, who conquered far and wide, who slaughtered his own followers—among them his own mother and his two young sons—and his enemies by the thousand, only to die by the hands of his brother and a servant, prophesying that one day a white race would rule over the nation he had founded. The regimental system that Tshaka perfected among the people over whom he ruled, was first organised by a Zulu chief named Dingiswayo, under whom Tshaka served in his youth. The older chief had taken the idea from seeing European troops at the Cape, whither he had wandered, and when Tshaka became the chief of the Zulu tribe he organised an army on the same lines as his old commander had done. The plan was to have every young man enrolled as soon as he was old enough to be a soldier, the regiments being arranged on an age system. The young men had to be trained at the royal kraal, and evasion of enlistment meant death. The discipline of the army was very strict, and celibacy was enforced until the soldiers had won the privilege of marriage by good service, when they were allowed to “tunga,” as it was called, and means literally “to sew,” for a married man, or kehla, wore his hair worked up into a ring round his head, a great sign of dignity.

Tshaka's rule altered the native map of South Africa considerably. His oppression drove Umziligazi, or Moselikatsi, as the Dutch called him, across the Vaal river to found the Matabele nation. Umziligazi was one of Tshaka's most trusted indunas, and was a great warrior, and as unscrupulous as his chief. He offended Tshaka after a successful fray in 1817, in which he had destroyed

numberless men, women and children, and collected much spoil of cattle and grain, by not presenting the loot to his supreme chief. Tshaka promptly sent out a large impi to wipe out his presumptuous induna and his kraal, but Umziligazi was warned in time, and fled over the Drakensberg. After devastating the country north of the Vaal, he went into what is now Matabeleland and here he exterminated the men of the country, saving only a few of the lads and young women. The nation he founded there remained powerful until under Umziligazi's son, Lobengula, it was defeated by Mr. Cecil Rhodes' forces, and Rhodesia was formed. This country had long been coveted by the Boers, and its acquisition by Mr. Rhodes is one of the finest bits of our imperial history.

The Fingoes of the Eastern provinces of Cape Colony and the Kafirs of Natal are also descended from the Zulu fugitives from Tshaka, who waged war on his own subjects as ruthlessly as he did on outside tribes. The Zulu kings, though they fought persistently with the Boers, lived side by side with the English in peace till war was forced on them in 1879. Some years after the war, when I was quite a child, Uncle Richard came to England, and I often heard him discussing the question of the war with my father. Though it never affected Uncle Richard's warm friendship with Sir Bartle Frere, he disagreed with the latter's policy, and thought our reasons for going to war trivial and quite inadequate. England, at least, paid dearly for the war, for the loss of the Transvaal, with all its subsequent troubles, followed naturally. The Boers would have been kept in check by the Zulus had we not destroyed the power of the latter, for the feud between the Boers and Zulus was an old one. The early Boer trekkers from Cape Colony had incessant struggles with the fugitive



Zulus under Umziligazi and with Dingaan, in what is now Northern Natal, before they could establish themselves at Winberg on the Vet river.

Dingaan was the brother of Tshaka, who murdered his chief and seized the supreme power. My third stay in South Africa was in this country, the scene of many battles. I remember that when I was outspanned on my way up to Vryheid, my Cape driver pointed to the peaceful, gently flowing stream by which I was lunching comfortably, and said: "That Blood River, Missie, that run red one day, Zulu blood, run red again other day." The recent disaster the man alluded to was the Blood River Poort affair, that we had sad cause to remember in the late war, and the former to what is still kept as a day of rejoicing in the Transvaal, as "Dingaan's Day." It was one Sunday, in 1840, that the Boers, after a piece of unexampled treachery on the part of Dingaan, met the Zulu forces at the Blood River and defeated them so completely that the chief fled, leaving, it is said, over 3,000 dead behind him. The river ran red that day.

From a member of the Natal Police force I have an account of a visit he made to Umgunhlovu, where Dingaan's kraal was, and a graphic description of the chief's treacherous action to the Boer emigrants who went to him on a peaceful mission: "The site of the kraal," he says, "is a sloping hill, well supplied with water from two streams, and it covered a large area. The huts were estimated at 1,700, the greater portion of which were barracks for the large impis always under training. The huts can be traced by the remains of the fireplaces still visible and in a wonderfully good state of preservation. . . . A stony ridge across the stream . . . is the 'Hloma Maberto,' or hill of execution, and during the reign of the tyrant Dingaan it ran with the blood of guilty and innocent

alike, countless numbers being sacrificed to appease the blood-lust of the king."

It was to this man that Piet Retief, at the head of seventy Boers, went with a view of obtaining a concession of land, and as an earnest of good faith he took with him many hundreds of head of cattle that had been captured by the Boers, and for the restitution of which Dingaan had stipulated before he would consent to treat. The cattle were handed over, and Dingaan spoke his visitors fair, and for two days the Boers remained at the kraal and were well treated. During this time a document was drawn up and signed by the chief in which a tract of country, extending from the Tugela to the Umzinvubu river, was ceded to Retief, as the governor of the British Emigrant South Africans.

During their stay the Boers camped at the eastern gate of the kraal under a milkwood tree, and it was under this tree that they piled arms in accordance with Zulu etiquette, that requires arms to be left outside a kraal when the visit is one of peace, when they were invited to say farewell to Dingaan before they trekked homewards. The Boers had been warned of treachery, but refused to have their faith shaken in Dingaan's word. They found the chief in company with his indunas, and ranged round in a semi-circle were two of his regiments. The chief took a polite farewell of the Boers, and after beer had been offered them, the regiments were ordered to dance and sing for their amusement. As they danced, the natives gradually surrounded the Boers, and when they had done so completely, the king sprang to his feet, and shouted: "Kill them. Kill the wizards." A desperate fight for life ensued, but unarmed the Boers could make but little resistance, and the struggle was soon over.

The only Boer who escaped death at the kraal was the

man in charge of the horses, who was rounding them up at the time of the slaughter. He had a race for life that has hardly a parallel in history, one man followed by countless numbers of fleet-footed savages, thirsting for his blood. His escape, indeed, would mean the death of his pursuers for failing to carry out their king's commands. He was overtaken, after a chase of nearly fifteen miles, and then met the fate of his comrades. Small wonder that the Boers' vengeance for such a deed was one, the memory of which still lingers among the Zulus. It was Andries Pretorius, after whom Pretoria is named, who led the Boers against Dingaan, and finally crushed his power, for after the Blood River massacre, the chief was exiled, and his brother Panda put in his place.

The Natal natives have never given much trouble since we occupied the country. Safe from the despotic power of the Zulu kings, they have flourished under English rule, and only now and again given cause for uneasiness to their rulers.

The Langabelele rising in 1873 was of no importance, but it led to the raising of the Natal Mounted Police, or Natal Police as they have been called since responsible government was given to Natal in 1894. In this new body the Government police forces were amalgamated, and its work was to keep peace among nearly half a million natives and over 30,000 Indian coolies. The average force of the Natal Mounted Police for eighteen years was two hundred, not a large number for such work in a mountainous colony with but few roads. It began with only fifty Europeans, the raising and organisation of the force being in the hands of Major Dartnell, late of the 86th and 27th Regiments—now Sir J. G. Dartnell, K.C.B., C.M.G.—with Mr. G. Mansel—now Colonel Mansel, C.M.G.—and Mr. F. A. Campbell as sub-inspectors, and



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR JOHN DARTNELL, K.C.B., C.M.G.

*To face p. 218.*





Mr. W. Stean, late of the C.M.R. as sergeant-major. These officers had a lively time when organising the Natal Mounted Police.

For many years Major Dartnell—who was also Commandant of Volunteers—was his own paymaster, quartermaster, and adjutant, so that his duties were many, and his difficulties great. For some time Government would not sanction enlistment in England, so that all the early recruits were from the Colony, and were what is best described as “hard cases.” The men certainly worked hard, but equally certainly they drank hard, “square face,” undiluted with water, being their favourite drink. Wild as they were, they were tamed very successfully by Sergeant-Major Stean, who proved himself equal to the occasion.

One of the sergeant-major’s methods was unusual but most efficacious. He used to mount troublesome men on Cracker, an historic animal that was the first pack-horse bought for the force. This horse’s unrivalled powers of bone-shaking promoted him to the dignity of a punishment mount for obstinate recruits. A few doses of Cracker soon brought the wildest to reason. In vain the troopers purloined the brute at night and tied him up in the square, hoping that he would contract horse-sickness and die. He throve on the treatment. One wretched man who was on his back tried to shoot him during mounted pistol-practice, but he missed, and Cracker shied him off promptly. If any trooper gave his horse a sore back, he was given Cracker as a substitute, and it was wonderful how few sore backs there were to complain of. For many years Cracker lived and broke in recruits for the Natal Mounted Police.

## CHAPTER X

### A SETTLER'S HOME

THE most typical sight of life on a farm in Cape Colony I had when I spent three months with my cousin, Mrs. Alexander McDonald, in the Upper Zwart Kei district. Lily Fountain, the name of the McDonalds' place, was thirty miles from Queenstown, where was the nearest station, and forty miles from Tarkastad, which was their post town, though only a village lying off the line.

It was in the spring that I left Johannesburg and started on my way to Queenstown, but instead of going there direct, I went round to spend a week with the Charles Southeys on my way. From Schoombie the Southeys' station, there were only two trains in the day, one a passenger and the other what is known as an "accommodation train," that is to say a goods train with a passenger carriage attached. Owing to the proper train passing Schoombie at a most inconvenient hour, I chose to travel by the "accommodation," though it is only a third-class carriage that is attached to it, and in South Africa it is almost impossible to travel by anything but first-class.

I had quite an amusing experience on the way, and was much entertained by the care the railway officials took of me. I started by being locked into an empty compartment, and at the first station at which we stopped I heard the station master gravely assuring an invading army of men, who had come from a football match, I believe, that a sick lady was in my carriage, and she must on no account be disturbed. I was lost in amazement at the

fertility of his imagination as I listened. The next station master rose to the occasion even more manfully, for he carried me off bag and baggage to the engineer's coach that was waiting to be hitched on to our train, and here, having secured the use of the coupé for me, he established me in it for the night. I was really quite uncomfortable at all the fuss made, for I was quite prepared to make the best of the surroundings I had chosen, but, nevertheless, I appreciated my quarters, and was not a little glad to be undisturbed at the junction, where I should have had to leave the accommodation train for the Johannesburg-East-London mail. The engineer's coach was transferred from one train to the other, and I passed over the great Stormberg fast asleep, only waking in time to make a hurried preparation for my arrival at Queenstown.

Though I had been two years in the country, I had not even then realised the length of time taken by letters to get to out-of-the-way places, and my letter to Mrs. McDonald to announce the date of my arrival had not reached her in time for her to send to meet me. I found myself consequently stranded at Queenstown, and was rather puzzled what to do. However, the first thing, obviously, was to go to the hotel and have breakfast, and this I did, and then confided my troubles to the landlord, who proved to be an English gentleman. He rose to the occasion of helping me as simply and promptly as the station masters had done, for they all seemed to take it as a matter of course that a stray female must be looked after and fussed over. The landlord promised to hunt the town over for news of Mr. McDonald, and in the meantime his house-keeper would look after me. Presently he returned in triumph. Although Mr. Alexander McDonald was not in town, his brother was, and the latter would carry me off in the afternoon to his own place, that lay between



Queenstown and Lily Fountain. From his home he would send a native on to my cousin to explain where I was, as by that time she would have received my letter and be wondering what had become of me. Of course, from an out-of-the-way up-country farm there was no telegraph wire, or any public means of communication with the outer world.

So, early in the afternoon, my new escort arrived, not at all overwhelmed by the unexpected charge of me and my baggage, all of which was soon stowed away in the roomy spider. Before leaving the hotel I naturally asked for my account, and my host smiled, and after consideration asked what I had had, ignoring altogether my use of his house, and the fact that the whole of the morning had been spent in attending to my affairs. In the end the amount of one shilling was his charge, and his parting shout to Mr. Willie McDonald as we drove off was, "You might have left me my young lady a little longer." I was not a little entertained by my first experience of the ways of up-country hotel-keepers.

Later when travelling by myself I had a very ridiculous, and by no means pleasant experience with a very different up-country hotel-keeper. It was a little shanty where I was to pass the night, and a room had been engaged for me beforehand. I arrived tired out, and though it was late afternoon, I went straight to my room, only anxious to lie down and rest, and never thought of seeing where my driver and his helper were to be put. A thunderstorm was just about to break, and to add to my discomfort, I soon discovered that the only person visible about the place was the landlord, and he was most decidedly the worse for drink—and sociable! To do the man justice, his intentions for my entertainment were excellent, all he wanted was a companion to drink with. For hours I had to

barricade my crazy window and door, declining offers of champagne with vigorous shouts through first one and then the other, as my would-be friend—a huge ex-prize fighter by-the-by—appeared at them alternately, begging me in a squiffy, whining voice to have, “a leetle glass of champagne.” I could not help telling the story afterwards, and for ages “a leetle glass of champagne” was a joke against me. While the thunder was crashing overhead and the lightning flaring, I expected every moment that the door would give way before the blows of the drunken man, but I could not help laughing at my predicament. It really was too absurd to be held up for hours by a squiffy up-country landlord. My Cape driver and his sturdy Kafir underling would have been most welcome helps, but I had no idea where they were, and obviously could not go in search of them. The only other guests in the house were a dying woman and a friend who was nursing her, and even they were equally beyond my reach. At last, about midnight, to my great joy, I heard loud snores from the outside of my room, and knew that my too-friendly hotel-keeper was asleep. I must say that he was sober, and evidently very much ashamed of himself, when I saw him before I left early the next morning.

Queenstown is built in a form that lends itself particularly well to defence. The streets all radiate from a centre, like the spokes of a wheel, and guns placed at the hub can sweep all the roads and keep the approaches safe. Considering the many struggles with the Kafirs that we have had in the neighbourhood of the town, its design struck me as being particularly appropriate. On my return journey to Queenstown, I was shown the place where the father of Sir Theophilus Shepstone once lived, and where “Somptsu” had picked up his wonderful knowledge of the natives and their ways. Sir Theophilus was interpreter

to Sir Harry Smith in the affair during the Kafir war of 1835, in which our cousin George Southey shot Hintza, the Kafir chief.

The story of Hintza's death is quite dramatic. Sir B. D'Urban, the Governor of Cape Colony, and Sir Harry Smith had burned Hintza's kraal, and the chief, having surrendered and accepted the terms of peace offered, he promised to return a large number of colonial cattle that his tribesmen had taken. Sir Harry Smith and a small force went back with Hintza towards the Kei to receive the cattle. On the plea of having it in readiness, Hintza sent in his chief man ostensibly to order it to be collected, but really, as it turned out, to ensure that it should not be found. On the way Hintza, who was splendidly mounted, tried to make his escape, but the small force of the Corps of Guides, among whom was Uncle Richard's brother George, were too quick for him. Just as they reached the top of a precipitous hill, however, the chief and his men made another attempt, and bolted, pursued by George Southey and another Guide, named Shaw. Sir Harry Smith fired twice at Hintza, but missed, as he galloped after, but overtaking him he managed to drag him off his horse. Hintza struggled free and made for the bush, but George came up, and as Hintza ran down the bed of a river, called to him to stop or he would fire. No notice being taken he shot the chief, who fell, but picking himself up dashed into the thick undergrowth. George and Sir Harry Smith's A.D.C. dashed after him, and my cousin was startled by an assegai striking the rock over which he was scrambling. Turning, he saw a native's head so close to him that it was difficult to fire, but he swung round and killed the man, who proved to be Hintza, before he could strike with his assegai a second time. A court of inquiry was held upon George for his action, but he was acquitted.

But to return to my journey. The district round Queenstown has great open sweeps of glorious rolling country, with ranges of mountains that are covered with bush and seamed with great kloofs. The Amatola Range, the chief stronghold of the Kafirs during our many wars with them, lay to the south, and there many of our men were killed when trying to drive the natives out. I saw more of this country, however, when I left Lily Fountain, for though the first time I crossed it we started from the hotel fairly early, there were so many commissions to be done before we left the town, that it was quite dark before we reached the Willie McDonald's house. Here the unlooked-for guest was given a truly hospitable welcome.

The following day was spent in exploring my new surroundings. The farm was in a rocky, hilly part of the country, and was so stony and barren that it was stocked with Angora goats, that throve on the rough, sweet grass, and ranged the surrounding kopjes as to the manner born. This was the only goat farm that I saw in South Africa, and from a picturesque point of view I wish that there were more of them. The long white silky coats of the Angoras, and their dark eyes and sharp horns, made the creatures perfect pictures as they stood out against the sun-baked stony hills and the vivid blue of the sky.

In the afternoon a novel diversion was provided for me in the shape of a native witch doctor, who squatted on the kitchen floor and told our fortunes, and threw his bones in quite the approved South African story-book style. He was a weird, wild-looking old creature, but I cannot say that his fortune-telling rivalled his appearance in effect. All that he told us could have been easily worked from a little judicious pumping of the house servants, so I concluded that the dirty prophet was not a first-class specimen of his trade. This was the only witch doctor I ever consulted,



and the performance was rather tame, but an amusing incident once occurred with one, who had the reputation of being a noted rain-maker. One of our cousins and another man went off to see the rain-maker from Cape Town, near which he lived, and as there was a severe drought in full swing just then, they decided to ask him to use his rain-making powers for their benefit. When they made their request, the man obligingly promised them an abundance of rain, and they left, hoping that his words might come true. All too soon for the comfort of the prophet seekers the promised rain came, for a deluge descended on their way back, and they were drenched to the skin before they could gain shelter. They resolved that never again would they interview a rain doctor, without first making provision for possible contingencies.

On the second day after my arrival at the Willie McDonalds, my cousin's husband arrived and carried me off in his Cape cart to Lily Fountain. It was a drive of about two-and-twenty miles, and the country was bathed in moonlight by the time we reached our destination. Very attractive and peaceful the homestead looked as we came up to it. The servants' huts and a large cattle kraal lay at a few hundred yards' distance, and made a connecting link between the house and its surrounding buildings and the vast veld stretching away on three sides. On one side, with only a strip of garden and a deep, rough river-bed between, rose abruptly a flat-topped mountain, with its steep precipices and mysterious-looking kloofs, that were rarely trod by any human foot, but were secure fastnesses for baboons and other creatures of the wild.

Lily Fountain was too English in the arrangement of its immediate surroundings to be a typical up-country farm, though the house was built with only one storey, and with an uncovered stoep in the Dutch fashion, instead of with

one of the verandas that give to houses in Natal and about Johannesburg such a strong likeness to the Indian bungalow. It is a long building, with large rooms that open out of passages instead of from a central room, that is such a favourite device in most of the Dutch farmhouses. The entrance is on one side of the house, and to the left as you enter, the kitchen, pantries etc., stretch away, facing into the large courtyard that lies to the south. Round this yard are many outside rooms, used as men's bedrooms, and the dairy and other offices. On the north side runs the stoep, and below it the beautifully-kept gardens, for Mrs. McDonald is devoted to her flowers, and when I was there she had an excellent German gardener. This old man was quite a character. Every now and again he would announce that he wished to leave, and off he would go to have a few weeks' carouse, then, miserable and penitent, would come back and entreat to be forgiven. He was always reinstated, as the condition of the gardens under Kafir labour was my cousin's despair, and she was only too thankful to get the old man back. The last I heard of him was that in the late war he went off and joined one of the colonial mounted forces to fight on our side. The gardens and peach orchards sloped down to the bed of a stream, the fountain from which the house takes its name, for only a mile or so above the house it springs up in fountain form from the bed of a beautiful kloof on the mountain side. After a heavy storm the stream is turned into a torrent, and rushes down its steep cutting with irresistible force.

Some time before I was there this innocent-looking "fountain" when in a sudden angry mood nearly caused a bad accident. In the neighbourhood of the house the weather had been good, and though a storm had been raging higher up in the mountain, there was nothing to

warn of impending danger in the quiet home waters. One of the McDonald boys was sitting idly on a wall high over the stream, when his mother, who was on the stoep, saw him leave his perch and stroll towards her. Three minutes later a huge rush of water tore down the narrow river bed, flooding the lower part of the garden, and carrying away bodily the wall on which her son had been sitting.

Beyond the garden boundaries the river banks fall away, and are soon little higher than the now wide river bed. By the sides of South African river beds are "the lands," or cultivated strips of ground that on account of their position are easy to irrigate. Too much irrigated they may be sometimes, for after one storm we found half the mealie—Indian corn—field bare mud, and from the other half even the top earth washed away. Mealie patches belonging to the natives often line the river beds when they are wide and shallow, for the natives cultivate them largely, which is not surprising, as mealie meal is their staple food. They cook the meal in an iron pot over an outdoor fire, and as soon as it is ready they sit round and each dips his long spoon into the pot, laughing, chattering and eating all at the same time. Kafirs are most cheerful so far as my experience of them goes, and they are quite happy with their mealie pot, and, for a great treat, an occasional meal of cheap meat.

The natives in that district are mostly Fingoes—Zulu fugitives—and until our rule was established there, they were terribly bullied by the Kafir tribes into whose country they had wandered. The tables have been turned since then, for the Fingoes have always been on our side, and have supplied native levies in our Kafir wars, so now they are proud and lazy, and in districts like the Upper Zwart Kei, where they are numerous, they oppress the Kafir tribes whenever there is a chance of doing so.

All the McDonald's servants were Fingoes, with the exception of a particularly nice Kafir girl, who was laundry maid. This girl, who supported an old mother, was always bright and pleasant-mannered, but my cousins were afraid that for her own sake they would have to send her away. The Fingoes hated her, and said she was a witch and had the evil eye, and though they did not dare openly to do harm to her or her mother, they were very likely to poison them, or otherwise get rid of them. When I left Lily Fountain I presented this girl with an old silk sunshade, and the gift so delighted her vanity that she dropped on her knees and kissed my hand, while she gazed up at me with an air of devotion, and poured out her thanks in a stream of soft Kafir words. Yet her complexion could scarcely need shelter from the sun, and her curly wool was much too thick for her head to need protection.

During the delightful time I spent with my cousins, I saw a good deal of the working of a large South African farm, and whenever possible I loved to share in the outdoor labours. My energy in learning to farm caused much amusement, for the women on colonial farms have far too much indoor work on their hands to have time or energy to give to any outside. But everything was so new to me that I was always longing to help, and it is to be hoped that my efforts did not impede greatly the more efficient work of the others. Stacking forage for the horses' winter food I thought great fun, and spent a whole morning over it. I stood on a waggon and threw up the bundles that were deftly caught by a man standing in the open doorway, and by him were thrown on to another man who stacked the forage in its proper place as he received it. I was hard at work, and feeling rather proud of the dexterity with which, after a little practice, I could throw up the bundles, when I was suddenly disturbed by shouts of



laughter. Looking down, I found that one of my young cousins, who had been away that morning, had returned, bringing with him a strange Englishman. My cousin was immensely diverted by the sight of my energy, and the new arrival gazed at me politely through his eye-glass, as though the scene had been got up specially for his entertainment. I know that the sight of Lex's grinning face and the handy presence of the bundles of forage were too much for me, and I diverted my next bale from the expectant man above to the head of the one below, and ammunition being plentiful, a battle royal followed, till I had beaten off the enemy and could once more turn my attention to business. Pumpkin gathering I found easy, but tiring, for the pumpkins are heavy. A voerloeper, who is almost invariably dressed in a once scarlet uniform coat, under which his sticky little legs make a very funny appearance, leads along a Scotch cart and a pair of oxen, and you walk behind and pick up the pumpkins and pile them up in the cart. A very simple affair.

The farm is very extensive, stretching for miles in all directions from the homestead, and as a large number of horses are kept, we had many grand rides over the veld, often making some farm-work at an outlying kraal the excuse for a ride. The country lies high, with stretch after stretch of swelling uplands, from which the McDonalds' mountain rose abruptly in the foreground, and in the distance were mighty ranges towering up in every direction. Far off the great Winterberg rises, white with snow in the winter, to the south a giant range of purple heights, impossible to cross during many months of the year when its lofty passes are blocked with snow, and far, far away is the Amatola range, where many a fugitive native sought shelter from our arms during the Kafir wars. It is a land,

too, of mighty storms. I have seen a tiny black cloud, no bigger than my hand, in the middle of a blue sky, and have watched it swelling and blackening till it descended in a deluge of hail and rain, accompanied by blinding lightning and crashing thunder. I concluded that at last I had come to the land where storms are made and started on their awful way.

I was told of a very curious storm incident that had happened a few miles from Lily Fountain. Five Kafirs, while dipping sheep for scab disease, had been killed by one flash of lightning on an apparently cloudless day. My informant was standing near at the time, and saw the sudden glare of the flash, but could discover no cloud in the heavens either before or after. A native had been killed in one of the servants' huts at the farm a few years before my visit, and Mr. McDonald told me that when he went to the hut a few hours afterwards, everything lay untouched exactly as the blasting flash had left it. No native would touch the body, or anything that had been struck by the lightning, and as they would not even go into the hut after the body had been removed, it was pulled down. Yet the Kafirs went on living unconcernedly in the other huts just as before. They said that a big black bird had flown into the hut and killed the man.

I once experienced for myself, at our house near Maritzburg, what strange ideas natives have about lightning. During a storm I had gone to my favourite refuge and buried my head under the pillows, and presently I heard a knock at the outside door that led from my room to the veranda. I took no notice, as I felt sure it was one of our Zulu boys who had orders to fly when a storm was coming up and rescue our saddlery from the veranda, where it was usually airing, before the rain swept the place. I heard the door open, and felt, rather

than heard, that my saddle was being put on its stand, where it stood for safety in my bedroom. Then there were some soft movements about the room, and finally the boy departed through the inner door that led to the house. I was much too terrified to pay any heed to what he did, but never, I thought, did I remember such suffocating heat as now seemed actually to scorch me. Presently the storm rolled away, and I sat up, and after a look round laughed heartily. My two large windows that had been standing open were now shut and fastened, both doors had been shut, and the one on to the veranda was locked, while to crown all, a heavy jackal carriage-rug had been put so softly over me that I never suspected its presence. The conscientious boy had done all he knew to make sure that the big bird, or whatever they consider lightning to be, should not hurt his Inkosikas.

The postal arrangements at Lily Fountain had all the delight of novelty to me, but they might be trying in the case of an emergency. Our letters left the railway at far-off Cradock, and they travelled sixty miles by post-cart to Tarkastad, whence they started again by native mounted messenger to a farm about five miles distant from us. From this farm any member of the family who was riding, or a native servant, would fetch them, together with the mails for several farms that lay on the far side of Lily Fountain. So twice a week on mail days neighbours dropped in, and there was quite an excitement when the mail arrived and the various packets were distributed. Then after much leisurely gossip and, perhaps, a stay for the evening meal, the visitors would all jog home, each with his budget of letters and papers. The mails sometimes had exciting adventures on the way. There were at least two rivers to be crossed that were frequently impassable, but these emergencies were provided for by

wires stretched across the river at a safe height from the floods. The letter-bag would be pulled along the wires to the farther side, where another native was ready to carry it on. On the Kei, an important river that we crossed by a long bridge built very high over the water between Queenstown and Lily Fountain, there had been a terrible catastrophe when the former bridge, together with several ox and mule teams and the men with them, had been swept away in a raging torrent. Yet when I saw the river it was as quiet as any peaceful English stream wandering among level meadows.

One of my early experiences of the sudden changes of weather was very unpleasant. It was a cold wet snap that always causes great anxiety to the Cape farmers, as it often comes after the dry cold winter, when their stock is in poor condition. The animals die in great numbers at such a time, unless the greatest care is taken of them. We were having lovely weather, when the wind swung round suddenly to the south-east, which, though a dry wind at Cape Town brings rain further up country, and this lasted for three days. The Kafir herds would never have left shelter to look after their flocks, but under Mr. McDonald's supervision they were soon at work, and collected and drove down the sheep into a big kraal behind the house. When looking after his own sheep, Mr. McDonald found a number of strayers from a neighbouring farm, where two less experienced settlers had gone from home, imprudently leaving their stock to the care of natives. These sheep were brought down to Lily Fountain and shared the shelter of the kraal, though many of their fellows wandered over the veld and died from cold and exhaustion before the rain was over. The flocks collected in the kraal had no food, for there was nothing to give them, but



they were sheltered from the cold, and when on the third day the sun came out in the afternoon, the famished sheep rushed out to get a feed on open ground. Even then they had to be watched, and were kept near to the kraal and brought in at night, as a return of the cold rain would have killed them in their weakened condition. For some time, indeed, they were kept in the neighbourhood of the house, and a great nuisance I found them. I do not care for their society, and it was quite ridiculous the fancy they seemed to have for me. When I walked about the farm they would insist on following and pressing round me, in spite of all efforts to send them off. It was quite a joke against me in the household, and one of my cousins declared that as I always wore a white gown they must mistake me for salt. I was consequently known from that time as the Pillar of Salt !

Sheep-shearing and sheep-dipping I saw while I was at the farm, the former taking place as soon as the summer had set in. The flocks were brought down to the river, and were then driven in and made to swim across it. Each flock was led by its voerbok, a goat with a bell round its neck, and if he went pluckily across the sheep followed him quietly. If, however, the goat gave trouble, the whole flock was immediately in confusion, trying to head for all points except where they were wanted. As the sheep have to swim the river twice before their wool is clean and white, it is a long business, especially as they are given a rest and feed between their baths. The shearing takes place in a barn, down the long length of which stands a row of natives, each with a patient sheep under his hands. Very quickly and cleverly the natives worked under the supervision of an Englishman, who stood in the doorway and gave a tally to every shearer as he finished his sheep. At the end of the day the Kafirs take their

pile of tallies to the boss and receive payment according to the number of sheep they have sheared.

In the sheep-dipping, carried out in accordance with Sir John Frost's Scab Act, I was much interested, for when at Cape Town I had heard much about the passing of the Act. The bath used is a long narrow hole in the ground that is cemented inside, and while deep at one end, shelves gently at the other, so that after the dipping the sheep can walk up, and the barrier being slipped aside, pass into a small pen on a still sloping floor, so that all superfluous moisture drains back into the bath. Early in the morning great cauldrons of Cooper's Dip were heated close to the bath, the stalwart Kafirs, whose business it was to attend to the fires and stir the mixture, looking like demons as they worked among the smoke and flames. When sufficiently boiled, the mixture—chiefly sulphur and water—smelling like the infernal regions, was poured into the bath, filling it to within about two feet from the top. At the deep end of the bath a pen had been railed in, and the first lot of sheep being driven in, the dipping began.

My cousins and a young Englishman who was living with them, helping in the work and learning at the same time, took turns in managing the dipping, and very hard work it was. The Englishman in charge took up his position just inside the pen, armed with a long stout stick forked at the end. At his signal a Kafir would seize a struggling sheep and drop it into the horrible mixture in the bath below, and as the poor thing rose to the surface, the Englishman would catch it neatly by the neck with the fork of his stick and push it under at least twice. The whole process was ridiculously like a reluctant child being dipped by a bathing woman, with much spluttering and choking on the part of the child, and conscientious sousing on the part of the dipper. As soon as it was cleansed the

sheep was pushed toward the shallow end of the bath, and, finding its feet, would walk up into the draining pen and presently be let out on to the grassy veld, apparently quite indifferent to the whole affair as soon as it was out of the bath. The anxious moment comes, if when a sheep has had its dip, it refuses to head for the shallow end, and is only pushed to safety with difficulty and the help of more men and their forks before it is suffocated. What with the smell and the heat of sun and fires, for the cauldrons have to be kept simmering and the bath replenished from time to time, it is weary work for white and black men. By night-time they present a weird spectacle, covered with yellow splashes from head to foot, so that black and white alike look as if they had spent the day in stoking in the nether regions.

Counting the sheep was to my mind the pleasantest work in connection with the flocks. I often walked out in the late afternoon with one of my cousins to the near kraal, keeping a careful look-out on the way on our dogs, for fear of poison having being put down for the jackals. It was pleasant to stand near the opening to the kraal and watch the picturesque native herds driving the flocks from their pasture on the open veld into the shelter of their stone enclosure, where they were safe for the night from marauding jackals. The last rays of the sun meanwhile bathed the wild country in softest light, and sometimes, when storms were near, in an unearthly glow of ruddy gold. My cousin would stand at the entrance and count the sheep as they poured past him. I never got over my first surprise at the dexterity with which this was done, for though hundreds of sheep would pour in within a few minutes, an experienced South African farmer can tell the number exactly, and, if only one is missing, find it out and ascertain the reason. The counting was not of course done every day, but

occasional oversight prevented thefts by natives and neglect of their flocks by the herds.

One or two of the kraals were several miles away, and we used to ride over to them to count the sheep, for if the Kafirs think that their boss is slack, they will not fail to take advantage of it. One day in a general inspection sort of ride, mainly devoted to stubbing out burweed that had been blown over from the neighbouring Dutch farm, we found that a large flock had wandered from its proper feeding-ground, and was getting mixed up with sheep of a different kind. That morning I had my first and last experience of driving sheep, and I can only say that since then I have felt the liveliest sympathy with sheep-drovers and their dogs, for I know how much they have to endure.

At the time of my visit to Lily Fountain lung sickness was making terrible havoc among the cattle, and a great effort was made to check its devastations by inoculating the sound cattle. The experiment was carried through most thoroughly by the head Government veterinary officer of the district. This officer must have been a fortnight at the farm, not only inoculating the Lily Fountain cattle, but the herds from neighbouring farms, as well as teaching the process to any farmer who wished to learn. There were seven men to help the vet. in the inoculation, these being Mr. McDonald and two of his sons, the Englishman who was staying with them, two English lads who rented Donnybrook, an outlying part of Lily Fountain, and lastly a Dutch hanger-on who occasionally earned a day's wage, but who, with his family, was mainly supported by my cousins so far as I could see. In the late war these Dutch were among the first in the district to turn against the English.

The big, high stone-walled cattle kraal behind the house



was the scene of the operations. To this enclosure there was no gate, but wooden bars could be fixed across the entrance. Early one morning a party of us from the house went to the kraal, and establishing ourselves on a huge buck waggon, watched the cattle being driven in. Such a scene of wild excitement it was. Many of the great trek oxen, only gathered in from lonely parts of the farm on the previous day, had hardly ever seen a man at close quarters, much less been handled, and they plunged madly in all directions, as the white men and Kafirs rode round and herded them towards the kraal. The dust flew, whips cracked, and all was turmoil till as many animals as were wanted for the day's work had been driven in.

Our buck waggon was drawn up just outside the entrance and level with the wall, but at a distance of a few feet from it, so as to leave a passage between wall and waggon. These buck waggons are ponderous affairs, and the one we were on had no tilt, the floor being entirely free, and only a narrow piece of wood to protect the sides. The vet. and two or three other men took up their position on the waggon, and one of my younger cousins entered the kraal, and choosing an ox that stood near the entrance, threw the noose-end of a long reim over the beast's horns, running backwards towards the entrance as he did so. In a moment half-a-dozen men, white and black, were also hanging on the reim checking the creature's wild rushes, and dragging it towards the open end of the passage beside the waggon. The ox not only struggled wildly to get free, but charged furiously at his captors, and the men had to be most active in avoiding his rushes. Some of the wildest of the oxen had to have two or three reims over their horns, and men had to hang on behind, as well as before, to curb the rushes. One great black animal, with a broken reim dangling from

his horns, cleared the kraal wall like a steeplechaser, and vanished in the distance.

When one of the animals had been brought to the opening and turned into the narrow passage, he was lashed securely to the back wheel of the waggon. This was a lively business and one ox very nearly succeeded in getting upon the waggon before he was secured. This he managed by forcing his hind legs against the wall, and raising his fore legs on the floor of the waggon, dashing his head wildly from side to side as he did so. My cousin Maggie was standing just in front of me, when I saw a great head with wide-spreading horns almost strike her. The head was free, the reims had broken, and he must have been on the waggon, if he had not made a momentary pause to take breath after his struggles. This saved the situation. As he gathered all his strength for a final effort, a new reim was slipped over his horns, and every man on the waggon fell on to it and held the brute till he was dragged down. He, however, also got off without being inoculated.

When properly secured to the waggon the inoculation of the oxen was simple. The vet. leaned over the side of the waggon, caught the ox's tail, and with a kind of syringe injected the serum, a few moments sufficing for the operation. The last act of the drama was often the most exciting of all, for by this time the creature was half-mad with rage and fright. The reims had to be caught off suddenly, the men who undertook this difficult part of the work jumping back as they did so, and sometimes taking refuge under the waggon. With the quieter animals there was little trouble, as directly the last reim was jerked loose they would dash forward to the end of the passage, and then be driven out into open pasturage by shouts and whip cracks.

One very wild ox gave us a great fright. When he was released nothing would turn him. With a roar he lowered his head and charged straight forward, the natives, who stood ready to turn him, having to fly for their lives. The line he was taking led right between the homestead buildings and the native huts, and just as he charged a blind girl came out from the back of the house and began to make her way slowly across to the huts. She was thus in the very path of the rushing beast. No one on the waggon had a rifle, and it was impossible to do anything but watch for the apparently inevitable catastrophe. Strangely enough, the girl's blindness saved her life. Hearing the on-coming rush of hoofs, she was puzzled and stood still, and made no sound while the maddened ox tore past her, over the spot where she would have been had she not stopped in time, the animal's head was so low that he could only see straight in front of him, and she was so motionless that he passed without discovering her presence. We all breathed freely again as the ox disappeared in a cloud of dust still charging madly forward. It was rather singular that the bulls gave very little trouble, the cows being the wicked ones, and when at last the calves' turn came, their capture grew into a romp.

After the inoculation was over the animals had to be watched carefully for some time. We used to ride out and inspect them constantly, and invariably one or two fights had to be stopped each time. The animals' tails would often fall off below the spot where the injection had been made, and the smell of blood so excited the other oxen that they would fall on the unfortunate tail-less ones and bully them unmercifully. My cousins used to ride at the fighting, scuffling mass of angry cattle while I waited, hoping sincerely that the belligerents would not charge down in my direction, as I doubted whether my young

horse would be handy in a stampede. Luckily he was never put to the test.

The two young farmers I have mentioned as living at Donnybrook were constantly at Lily Fountain, which indeed was a hospitable centre for all the neighbourhood. One of these men, knowing that I had a taste for out-of-the-way curios, brought me one in the shape of a Kafir skull that he had picked up and made use of as a candlestick. Unfortunately I broke the skull, for while I was unrolling it from the beautiful lemur skin that was given me at the same time, I let it drop. I picked up the two parts, put them together, and setting the skull in my room, thought no more about the matter. A little later some one told me seriously that I had no right to carry away a man's skull from the rest of his body, which presumably was somewhere in the neighbourhood. As it was rather quaintly put to me, "perhaps at the Resurrection that Kafir may want his skull." This view was certainly new to me, but put before me as it was by an older person, I thought there might be something in it, or at least I could not feel sure there was not, so I considered what to do.

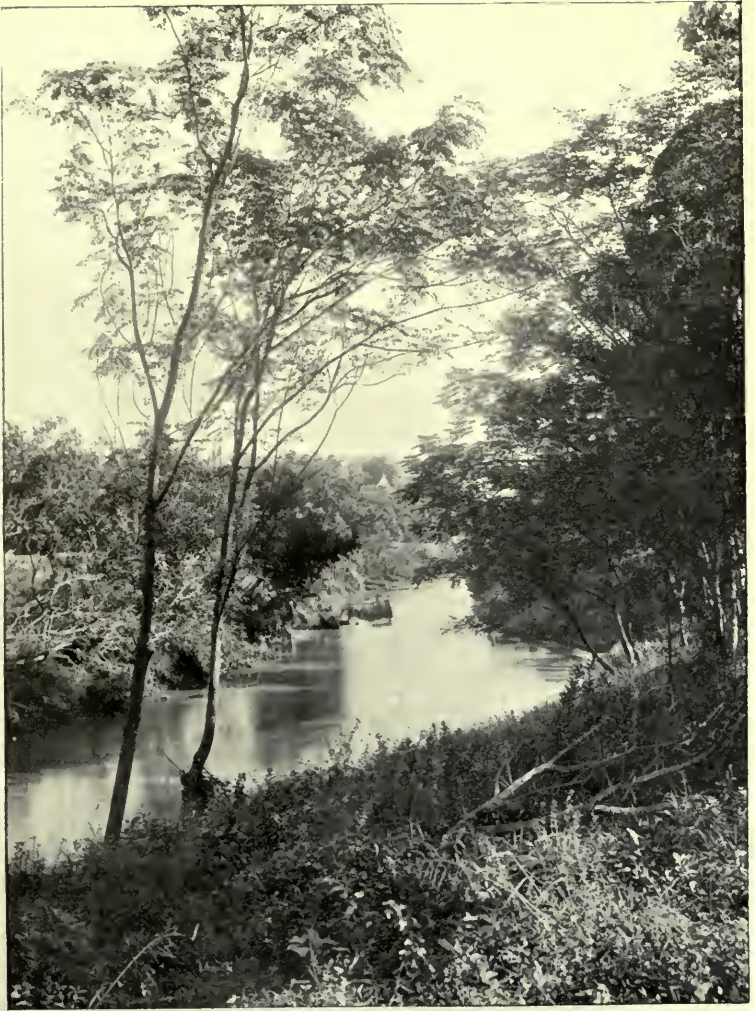
On no account would I hurt the donor's feelings by returning it, but I decided that it should not go to England. So I watched for an opportunity of going out alone, not an easy matter in such a large household, and at last I slipped out one afternoon with the skull hidden under my arm and a knob-kerrie as a walking-stick in my hand. I hurried unobserved up the spruit to just below where the fountain sprang from its green-wooded little kloof in the mountain side, and here the ground, that elsewhere was as hard as iron, was soft, for it had been trampled into mud by the feet of the horses and cattle that went there to drink. I selected a deep hole that had been trodden down by a



heavy animal, and dropping in the pieces of my Kafir skull, filled up the place with the soft earth. There, presumably, my curio lies to this day, trodden down deeper and deeper by the hoofs of the numberless animals that go there for water and shade.

As I turned away from the spot, I was startled to find a ringhaas, or South African cobra, watching me from a few yards off. It flashed across me that it was a common superstition among the natives, and especially among Zulus and the offshoots from their nation, such as Fingoes of the Queenstown district, that the spirit of a man enters into a snake when it leaves the body. Really, it seemed as if the Kafir's spirit had come back to look after his bones, but the natural instinct to kill a snake was too strong upon me to resist it. So I advanced upon it, wondering as I did so, if I could kill it with my kerrie, or if someone would come within hailing distance in time to help me. When I got fairly close, the ringhaas raised its head and spread out its hood, and I discreetly withdrew a few steps, not feeling sure of the efficacy of any blow I might aim at it. Then the snake moved backwards, and again I advanced, only to be stopped once more by an angry hiss as the creature reared its head and extended its hood. Again and again the same performance was repeated, the snake after each warning of what I might expect if I went too close, edging away backwards, till it vanished with the most extraordinary rapidity. The hole towards which it had been backing was so small and so well hidden that I had not seen it till the ringhaas disappeared down it.

I marked the place, and the following day one of my cousins, the lad who had given me the skull, and I spent a long time at the hole together trying to smoke out my snake and kill it. About the business that had led me to the encounter I said nothing, but in spite of all our



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*To face p. 242.*



trouble we could not find the snake, and as no one else had ever seen a ringhaas about the fountain, perhaps it was the native's ghost after all.

Church Sunday was a great day at Lily Fountain. It came round once a month, and as the little church was only five or six miles away, it was an understood thing that a fair contingent of the many young friends who flocked in from the neighbouring farms to spend the week-ends at the house, should turn out as part of the household. Quite a cavalcade would start in the Cape cart and on horseback, and the ride or drive was very pleasant in the fresh morning, before the sun became too hot for comfort. The way our colonists build these little churches, even in the most lonely districts, is most creditable. Often the farms are so scattered that only a few families can unite to build one, and secure the services of a clergyman for so many times in the year. Then the miles they go cheerfully to attend the services and the roads they have to go over show their earnestness about it. The church is always built near a farm in as central a position as possible, and at that farm open house is kept every Church Sunday, as a matter of course. People assemble early, and foregather on the shady veranda till their pastor walks over to the church, and all his flock follow at his heels. After the service is over the sociable side of the day once more asserts itself, and while some stay for the midday meal before they take their departure, others who live nearer set off as soon as they have seen all their friends and discussed the topics of the day. The hosts' hospitality is equal to anything demanded of it, and even a thunderstorm that kept the party together for the best part of a day would not disturb their equanimity.

One unfailing pleasure and interest that I shared with



my cousins was the care of the "haus" pets, or the young animals who, having lost their mothers, were brought up at the house. At one time there were two foals, two lambs, and a pair of Kafir cranes, and of these we each took one under our special care. My haus pet, "Dr. Jim," was a chestnut foal that one of my cousins and I found lying helpless and half-dead in the orchard. The poor thing having been tied to a tree with a reim, had run round and round till the reim had been wound so tight that it had cut the foal's flesh, and at last it had fallen overcome with fright and exhaustion. We cut the reim and did what we could for the poor baby, soothing its terror, and gently rubbing its stiff limbs till circulation was restored and we could move it into shelter. Dr. Jim soon got over his fright, but his legs must always be scarred, and indeed one often sees the legs of colonial horses marked in this way.

Besides Dr. Jim, I had two other pets assigned to me, one of which was a blue roan four-year-old, with the darkest blue head that I have ever seen. I took much interest in his education, and never allowed him to "tripple," as it is called, a kind of amble that Dutchmen affect, and many colonial horses are trained to, but which I cannot stand.

My other pet was an old English terrier with a particularly cantankerous disposition, but who was always good with me. One day, however, a visitor teased him, and my amiable dog retaliated by biting his hand hard several times. At first I did not interfere, as I thought it served the man right for worrying an old dog, but when blood was running from his hand in several places, and in bravado he refused to move away, I thought it time to act. So I gathered my furious terrier in my arms, and scattering the other dogs who were flying up to join in the fray, I shut him into my room till he had calmed down.

After a bad thunderstorm we used to turn out and hunt up our haus pets, for there was always the danger of their having wandered away before the driving storm, and if left out all night, the foolish little things would have died from exposure. We would wade about calling and searching till all had been gathered in safely, and one of my cousins was called Bo-peep, because she would often bring the lambs in her arms through the water to the safe shelter of the courtyard.

The great hour of the day for these haus pets was late in the afternoon when milking-time was over, and the separator was at work. They knew then that the time of their evening meal was drawing near. We often used to go to the dairy to watch the separator, and also to see the animals coming for their supply of milk. The foals would stamp their little feet with impatience, and the lambs bleat indignantly at being kept waiting, while the cranes hovered round with a view to possibilities, clearly thinking that they could not be left out when so much was going on. Directly the work of the separator was over, great pails of milk, from which the cream had been extracted, were brought out and put down, and all the animals, the house dogs included, flew to them, and for a time there was satisfied silence.

- One strong, self-willed lamb, though, would never wait till feeding-time. He had discovered that cream was nicer than milk, and cream he would have, in spite of all efforts to keep him away. I used to watch him pushing up to the dairy door, where he would get into a good position, sheltered from view by someone's skirts, then suddenly out he would dart, and pop his wicked little black head into a pail of cream before anyone could prevent him. Of course, he would be bundled out ignominiously, his face smeared with cream, and emitting baas of angry expostulation.

but before long the performance would be repeated. The dairy door always stood open, for every breath of air was needed, and the huge pails of cream stood on the cool floor, so that his trick had every chance of success. Haus animals are always larger and more impudent than those bred on the open veld, for they get more to eat, and are rather spoiled children altogether. I was told that the colts gave much more trouble in breaking than those did that were brought up in the ordinary way.

The blue Kafir cranes were found out on the veld when quite infants. They were beautiful birds, soft blue-grey in colour, and they grew big and strong on their food of mealie meal. As long as they were young they were perfectly tame and never wanted to wander away, but when they grew older a longing for the freedom of their natural life took possession of them, and they were allowed to fly away unhindered, though regretted by their friends.

In our rides we went sometimes to the native kraal, that lay about five miles from the house, and just outside the boundary of the farm. From here the McDonalds' servants and herds were drawn, and during the last Boer war there was a sharp fight between a party of marauding Boers and a few of our men close to the kraal. One young Englishman was shot through the lung, and must have died had it not been for the careful nursing he had at Lily Fountain, where he was carried. By great good luck a doctor happened to be staying with my cousins at the time, and between them all the volunteer was pulled through and recovered. Strangely enough he proved to be the son of old friends of the McDonalds.

A cousin of ours—a son of Sir J. Frost—who was driving near the Kei while this raid was going on, lost his cart and horses, as he was held up by the Boers. The

tables were turned though, when the Boers arrived at the farm of another of our Frost cousins. It happened that several Englishmen from the neighbourhood were at the house, when a native servant rushed in saying that the Boers were coming. In a flash the Englishmen were out rifle in hand, to line the aloe hedge round the house on the side on which the enemy had been seen. When the Boers galloped up a few minutes later, they had such a warm reception that their only idea was to get away as fast as their horses could carry them.

The Queenstown district—and indeed the whole of the Eastern Province—has always been a battle-ground, and one of our cousins had a most trying experience during the Boer invasion. She was little more than a girl herself, and was alone with her two babies and native servants, in a lonely house right out in the country. Early one morning a native girl flew in to warn her mistress that the Boers were all round the house. My cousin sprang out of bed, and had just time to drag her tiny baby and little child underneath it, when shots came from all sides. A party of Boers, pursued by the English, had taken possession of the ground round the house, and under the shelter of the garden hedges were making an obstinate defence. It was not until late in the afternoon that they were dislodged, and our troops released the poor girl and her terrified babies. Many shots had passed through the room, so that they had been obliged to stay crouched under the bed all through the long hot day.

The Dutch farmers of the Tarkastad neighbourhood were very disparaging in their views of our forces early in the war. One Boer inquired of an Englishman whether it could be true that twelve thousand men were on their way out from England. He was assured that this was so, and in great astonishment exclaimed "Allamaghtag! They



must be sending all the shop boys and clerks out! Who will be left to guard England? Any foreign nation can invade and sack it, for there can only be old men and boys left." And the good dopper refused belief, when he was told that we possessed a few more than twelve thousand able-bodied men in England.

Perhaps comfortable, solid ignorance of things British is safer than that dangerous thing, a little knowledge. A friend told me that one day he had been much taken aback by a pretty Dutch girl, who having heard that his regiment was thinking of giving a moonlight picnic, said to him with effusion: "Oh do, *do* give us a honeymoon picnic, please."

When the sad time came for me to leave Lily Fountain, I returned to the Cape, after staying a few days with a hitherto unknown cousin by marriage, Mrs. Harry Southey, of Queenstown. This time when I crossed the Stormberg it was by daylight, and the painful memories that since then have been associated with the mountain, always bring back that sunny morning when I stood out in the corridor watching the scene of grandeur that lay spread before me. The train struggled slowly, slowly up, zig-zagging in places, and at others the engine was taken off, run round a loop, and hitched on to the other end. Over and over again this was repeated, and I often think of what the terrible ascent must have meant to our soldiers.

When high up on the great mountain, I remember looking down—down into a lovely kloof, wooded and fertile, and with a charming farmhouse standing half way up the beautiful glen. It looked so peaceful and so far away from the world, as it lay hundreds of feet below our noisy, struggling train. I wonder what it looked like on that ill-fated day of battle! And below the opening to this kloof, for miles and miles, far as the eye can reach even

in that clear air, lay the swelling plains, blue in the sunlight. The Boers, as they lay hidden among the rocks on the mountain, must have watched our soldiers' movements at their ease. It was an ideal position for them to hold, for there is no sharp descent on the other side of the mighty Stormberg.

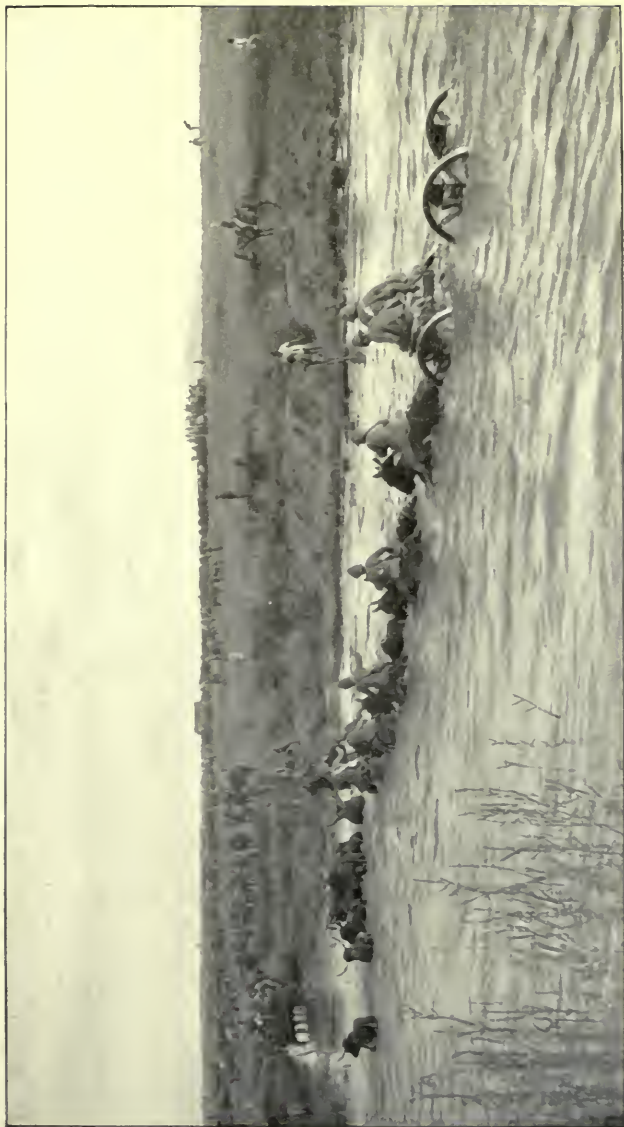
## CHAPTER XI

### ON THE FRINGE OF THE WAR

WHEN the second Boer War broke out in October, 1899, my sister and I were both in England, having returned from Maritzburg in the spring of the preceding year. Maggie was naturally anxious to join her husband, who was in Natal, and who would, she knew, at once volunteer for one of the irregular forces. In fact, before she left England in December, 1899, we heard that Tim had been given a commission in Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, one of the best of all the irregular corps that were raised during the war. Of course, I should have loved to go out too, but I had no husband at the front, and should only have been in the way. I regretted keenly that we were not in South Africa in a house of our own at the time, as then I could have remained without adding a superfluous non-combatant to the overcrowded hotels and boarding-houses.

My sister left by the Union R.M.S. *Norman*, that had been taken up as a troopship. The spare berths were allotted to non-combatants, and as we had a friend among the directors of the Union Line, Maggie was given a capital cabin to herself, a real boon as the ship was full up. When she started, our troops were known to be on the defensive in Ladysmith, and the Nicholson's Nek affair had already stirred our British calm, though few people anticipated the real seriousness of the struggle before us.

During the whole time we were separated, until I started to rejoin my sister and her husband in December, 1902, I had long letters from her by every mail, and from



FORDING THE BUFFALO.





these letters I give many extracts as they stand. The touches given at first-hand as they struck the writer, would, I think, lose life if they were rewritten by another pen.

At Port Elizabeth, to which place Maggie went by the *Norman*, the news that Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener were being sent out cheered up the travellers a little, though on four staff officers of General Buller's who came on board there, the gloom of Colenso remained unabated. From Durban she arranged to go straight on to Maritzburg with an officer's wife who had joined the ship, and Mr. Hill Trevor, who was also anxious to get through.

The latter town was full of officers either going up or returning from the front, and among them were many old friends of ours. My brother-in-law, however, was with the Ladysmith relief force, then resting at Chieveley, after the battle of Colenso, and General Darnell was shut up in Ladysmith. My sister's efforts were at once turned to meeting her husband, and the only chance of her doing so seemed to be for her to go to Mooi River, the last place on the railway to which anyone without a pass was allowed to go, and for Tim to get leave and join her there, if only for a few hours. So on the last day of the year Maggie went to Mooi River: "A lovely place," she writes, "and rather interesting, as it was shelled by the Boers last month. One of the shells fell in the garden of this hotel."

It was in the attack on Mooi River by the Boers that my brother-in-law had distinguished himself, and at Maritzburg Maggie had been overwhelmed with congratulations on her husband's bravery. Directly the Boers had opened fire, Captain Hamilton, with Tim and fifteen men of B Troop, Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, attacked a kopje held in force by the enemy. After nearly an hour's hot work a trooper named Massy was severely wounded in

the thigh. Massy's position was critical in the extreme, as the ground then held by the small attacking force was untenable, and Tim and one of his troopers, determined not to leave the poor fellow to his fate, tried to drag him beyond the line of fire. Just at this moment the men of No. 2 Section came up to support their comrades, but, in spite of this, it was found necessary to give the order to retire. The sergeant-major tried to get Massy on to his saddle, but had to give up the attempt, as the man was too badly wounded to be put up. He dismounted, therefore, and took Tim's place in helping to carry the poor fellow, who had already been taken about a quarter of a mile towards safety. Just then a shell exploded so close to the little party that it smashed one of the men's rifles to atoms. The fire was so hot that Tim told the men to get on as quickly as possible with Massy, while he, a very tall man, made a shield behind them with his body. He thus drew the fire away from Massy till the worst of the danger was over, and, strangely enough, he was not even touched, though shells and bullets rained all about him.

At the beginning of January, 1900, Tim got away from Chieveley with difficulty for a few hours on regimental business, and, what was still more difficult, he managed to get a pass for my sister to return with him. So Maggie actually went up and spent several hours in our camp at the front. She was, of course, the only woman there, as even the nurses were not allowed up.

It was a most interesting journey up the line. The train should have left Mooi River at 1.45 a.m., but having run off the line below Maritzburg, it was three hours late. At last Maggie and her husband got off in the grey dawn, and the train crept cautiously along for fear of any damage having been done to the line. At the place where Mr. Winston Churchill had been taken prisoner, there were

still two overturned waggons lying by the rails and a grave or two close by. At Estcourt there were a large number of men, and again at Frere there were between 12,000 and 14,000. A number of huge traction engines were scattered about Frere, looking ridiculously out of place and lost on the veld. Then came Chieveley, at that time our railway terminus, and "the greatest sight in the world except a battle, the British camp on the eve of action. Enough to make the rest of one's life seem flat and dull."

In front lay the scene of our Colenso disaster, a plain south of the Tugela, that was one great God's acre when I saw it later. There was the winding river, back from which over the open ground our old friends the Dublin Fusiliers, with the rest of the immortal Irish brigade, had walked as calmly as though marching off parade. But men were falling everywhere, struck in that hell of fire. Tim, who was watching from a short distance, told me how Colonel, now General Cooper, walked coolly along, carelessly swinging his cane as he went. He escaped, but the Dublins lost no less than eighteen of their officers and a terrible number of men, and the regiment won undying glory that day.

There were 12,000 to 13,000 men at Chieveley when Maggie was there. On the far side of the Tugela the tents of the Boer army were just visible, the smoke from their fires being seen plainly floating upwards. Our heliograph was being worked busily from a hill, communicating with Ladysmith, but alas the big guns were silent, after a particularly lively duel with the Boer guns the preceding night. The end of the engagement Maggie missed, owing to the train being so much behind its time, and thus, as she says—"I lost the possibility of a shell exploding close to me. The chance of a lifetime, for I can never hope for such a piece of luck again."



As it was only possible for my sister to remain in camp for a few hours, the guns had not begun to thunder again before she left. After a really awful journey, for the train crept along, sometimes taking hours to go even a few miles, she at last reached Maritzburg and went back to her old quarters. This boarding-house was in Longmarket street, the centre one in Maritzburg, and the street runs up the hill that rises gently to Fort Napier, the highest part of the town. We used to say that Maritzburg was like a hog lying down. The town ran up its back and crossways down its sides—the streets, Dutch fashion, running straight up and down and across at right angles—and Fort Napier was the head. The railway line that went over the neck had a station strong enough to be fortified, and divided camp and town.

Longmarket Street crosses the railway, the gates being guarded by sentries, and it is the main road to the camp. So Maggie from her veranda, only a little way from the line, and nearly opposite Government House, had much passing before her during that anxious time between the battle of Colenso and the relief of Ladysmith. At one moment a soldier's funeral from Gray's Hospital, or the legislative chamber that had been turned into a military hospital for colonials, would pass up to the camp graveyard. A sad little procession, with no band to play the Dead March, for all the bandsmen had gone to the front. There was only a firing party to give the soldier his last volley. Dead horses would be carted down from the camp, then a train of sick and wounded from the front would go downwards to the hospitals, six or seven huge ambulances with their great red crosses telling their own sad story. The worst cases were carried past on stretchers, the uncovered faces of the sufferers and the care with which the bearers moved, alone telling that life still lingered in the helpless forms.

Early in January, 1900, these trains of wounded were coming into Maritzburg daily, and orders having been sent down from the front for preparations to be made in the hospitals for 3,000 sick and wounded, it was concluded that the field hospitals were being cleared before an expected engagement. To add to the general alarm, a doctor who had gone up to Pretoria with some of our wounded men, taken prisoners by the Boers, came back to our lines by a roundabout way, and declared that we could never get to Pretoria, for the road bristled with guns all the way. Even if true, he had much better have held his tongue.

Alarming rumours of a serious reverse came only too swiftly, and a continual stream of soldiers going up the line told its own tale. Maritzburg simply swarmed with men who were being collected and passed on to the front. Companies of apparently every British regiment under the sun swarmed through the town—Gordon Highlanders, Middlesex, Leicesters, Devons, Dorsets, Somersets, irregulars of every description were sent up in those terrible days after the reverse on Spion Kop, the news of which disaster was only known in full on Sunday, January 28th. Naturally the news was a great shock to my sister, as her husband's regiment was so terribly cut up, though Tim was not present at the engagement. She knew many of the officers in Thorneycroft's Horse and the Lancashire Fusiliers, another regiment that suffered as much as the former, and among them had many friends. Tim, too, was not only grieved for his friends, killed, wounded or taken prisoners, but he was almost broken-hearted at not having been with his men on that day.

Long after Spion Kop, Maritzburg was one great hospital. From the time of her return from Chieveley, Maggie had gone constantly to the camp hospital, having a warm

welcome from the doctors and nurses, under whose direction she was able to do many little things to help the overworked staff. She took papers and talked to the convalescents, who were thankful for any break in the monotony of their life. She wrote letters, and undertook their postage for those who were too ill to write for themselves, and found many little outside matters in which she could help the nurses, and for which it was impossible for them to find time.

On one occasion a volunteer in a colonial regiment had been taken to the camp hospital in the dire confusion after Spion Kop, instead of to the volunteer hospital at the Legislative House. The man was badly wounded, and very much worried because his wife and family were stranded in Durban without any money. No doctor or nurse had a moment to attend to the poor fellow's trouble, so Maggie was appealed to, and from the secretary of the Volunteer Relief Fund she was able to get a form that she filled in from the sufferer's dictation, and helped him to sign by putting a X against the name that she had written for him. This form she took back to the Secretary, and two days later she received a letter from the Volunteer Relief Office at Durban, saying that £4 had been given to the wife and this sum would be given monthly as long as her husband was disabled. Such prompt help was greatly to the credit of the managers of the fund, and made welcome news for the anxious volunteer, who had little chance of making a good recovery while oppressed by the fear of his family starving.

Oh, the awful sights in the hospitals in those sad days! Men torn in every conceivable manner, and many dying from enteric and dysentery in the terrible heat. Even in the cool hall of the Imperial Hotel in Maritzburg, with a thorough draught through it, I have known the

thermometer stand at 110° in January, and one can hardly imagine what it must have been in the long lines of huts at the camp. Yet through all their sufferings the men were brave and patient, and were always grateful for any little attention. One day when Maggie was sitting by the bedside of a borderer, who was forgetting his own sufferings for a moment, as he gave an enthusiastic account of the splendid courage of a subaltern in the Dublins at Colenso, Dr. Lyons came and carried her off to see some of his other cases. One of these was a man whose leg had been amputated, and whom my sister found so cheerful that he consoled his distressed visitor with the philosophical remark: "It cannot be helped, you know."

At that time Maggie's letters were full of the pluck shown by our wounded, among whom she spent as many hours each day as she could manage. When she left home I had given her some books of soldier pictures, and I was thankful to hear how many dull hours they wiled away for the sick and wounded, before the books fell to pieces, after many months' hard work. Some friends near Maritzburg, too, sent papers for Maggie to take with her to the camp. Once when she had been distributing picture papers and other things among the patients, she tells me: "I heard a chuckle of delight from a man whom I had scarcely noticed. He had a copy of the 'Graphic' in his hands, and was looking at Charlton's picture, 'Trying to save the guns at Colenso.' I went to speak to him, and he—Jock—declared the picture was capital, everything exact, position and horses just as they were. And Jock speaks with authority, for he was one of the drivers, and among the few who were neither killed nor wounded with the guns that day. He is recovering now from illness, not from wounds. The sister and I decided that Jock must be given that picture, for which he was most



anxious, as soon as the paper had been the round of the wards."

The pictures and papers were an endless source of pleasure to the soldiers, and my sister soon told me that I need never expect to see my books back again. "You would not mind," she writes, "if you knew the pleasure they are giving to hundreds of our poor fellows. For weeks now they have lived at the camp, for fresh batches of men are being brought down constantly from the front, and from the hospitals at Frere, Estcourt, and Mooi River. They clear from the latter hospitals as soon as possible, so as to leave room for the worst cases from the front, for until they were established, so many men died on their way down here. To make room for the influx, the men here are sent on to Durban as soon as they can travel, either to be in hospital ships at anchor, or to go home, so that there are always fresh cases to whom the books are new. Of course, though, many poor fellows are a fixture here for a long time, their injuries being too severe for them to be moved. For instance, Alfred Chivies, the first man for whom I wrote a letter, was shot through the leg at Colenso, and has been here ever since that fatal day. He is not fit to be moved yet, but he is going on well, and is able to write his own letters now. It is the same with a man in the next bed to Chivies, who was also shot through the leg at Colenso, but the majority pass on."

When I heard of the success of my picture-books, I set to work to copy some soldiers on tinted cardboard, and paint them according to my fancy. These were sent out for the use of the soldiers as fast as I could get them finished, and I half-laughed and half-wept as I read of the fate of one of them. "Yesterday one of your pictures gave pleasure to a dying soldier. He was a 13th Hussar, named Russell, and when I went to No. 9 ward the sister

told me he was dying. I was shocked, for on Friday his bed had been out in the veranda, and he seemed to be getting better. I went behind the screen, already round his bed, to speak to him. The doctor had just gone, saying that he could do nothing more, but the kindest and most gentle of orderlies was beside him, fanning him and moistening his lips from time to time. I stayed some time, as Russell had intervals of perfect consciousness and seemed pleased to see me. I was holding a picture of a soldier in uniform in my hand, and I noticed that he was looking at it. I held it out, therefore, in a good light, and he was deeply interested. He told me it was very good, and declared that it was Lord Kitchener. I did not contradict him, for his pleasure in it was so pathetic, but I told him that my sister had painted it because she loved soldiers, and that she would be so pleased when she knew that it had given him pleasure. It was the last thing he looked on with conscious eyes."

My little picture had certainly not been meant for Lord Kitchener, but after this letter I got a picture of "K," and as soon as I had made some copies, sent them out. Maggie told me they were the greatest success. She also asked me to get what local papers I could and let her have them for distribution, as the men loved to get news from their own districts, and she only wished that we had friends in every county in Great Britain, as she could make use of them all.

One afternoon my sister went with the wife of an R.A.M.C. officer to a concert got up at the camp to amuse the soldiers. "It was such a pretty sight," she writes. "The piano was put outside one of the ward tents, on a kind of rough veranda that runs along each hut. As many chairs as could be collected were put about outside, and lots of rugs were on the ground for those who could not

be accommodated with chairs. The hospital uniform is bright blue, and the two hundred or three hundred men in all stages of convalescence made a most picturesque group. They all, whether only just able to leave their beds for an hour or two, or nearly well enough to undertake the journey to Durban, enjoyed the music immensely. Some of them were on crutches, many with their arms in slings, many, again, had their heads bound up, and, to complete the picture, there were several stretchers for those who were not able to move, but who entered into the enjoyment with the rest. The blue of the uniforms was only broken by the presence of two or three wounded officers in plain clothes, the staff of doctors and nurses, and a few visitors."

Then my sister touches on a subject that aroused much heart-burning and angry criticism at home. "You will probably see many contradictory reports in the papers about the management of the hospitals out here. I have asked dozens of men about it, as well as the nursing sisters, and here at least I have kept my own eyes open. I am thankful to be able to say that here, at any rate, it is wonderful how well things on the whole are managed. It seems just as well that these inquiries into the management should be made from time to time, as no doubt they stimulate the authorities to keep up to the mark. But when the enormous number of sick and wounded is considered, and the many difficulties that are unknown at home, but have to be contended with out here, I think that the organisation is quite wonderfully good. To give an instance to show how easy it is to condemn unless every side is taken into consideration. Several of the patients complained to me that they had not received their Queen's chocolate box, because they were unable to leave their beds and make the personal application that

is necessary at the office in camp, where the boxes are given out. Now I thought this hard, as surely those who were the most ill wanted the most cheering they could have, and the Queen's box was desired ardently by each and all of them. I spoke about it to one of the sisters, and she said that the regulation was really a good one, for if the very sick men were allowed to have the boxes, they would inevitably have them stolen, as the helpless men could not possibly protect them, and there was literally no place in the wards to put them away in. As soon as the men were well enough to walk to the office they were supposed to be strong enough to look after their possessions. I quite agreed with the sister, though I had not thought of this before, and many other of the complaints would collapse in the same way if the trouble was taken to inquire into them."

Life was very exciting in Maritzburg in those days, when the relief of Ladysmith was looked for daily and hourly. Rumours of every kind flooded the place—some true, some false, others merely premature, such as the news of Cronje's surrender that arrived several days before the event happened. At last, on March 1st, authentic news of the relief was received, and for this my sister had been prepared by the letters from her husband, who was with Thorneycroft's in the van of the relief force. When we think of what we felt at home when the great news came, it is no wonder that Maritzburg went mad with joy. "About 10 a.m. on March 1st, Mrs. Galbraith rushed into my room with the news that tidings of the relief of Ladysmith had been received officially. At that moment I heard wild cheering break out in the streets. I in my turn rushed off to Mrs. Browning, whom I found already busy putting up flags in her veranda. Then we came down and hoisted up my flag on the lower veranda.



How little you thought when you bought that flag for baby Jack to what use it would be put. I soon went to the Dartnells and there, a sharp contrast to the general rejoicing, I found poor Mrs. T. in her widow's dress. On my return I went right down Longmarket Street to the post office, and up Church Street. The scene on all sides was indescribable. Flags in profusion hung from almost every shop and house, and many strings of them ran across the roads. Thousands of people were in the streets, mostly wearing red, white, and blue cockades, and hundreds of them waving flags wildly. Vehicles of all sorts blocked the way, the horses, as well as dogs, cats, and even birds, being decorated with red, white, and blue ribbons. The noise was something to be remembered. Everyone was cheering, natives were yelling, the small boys of a fife and drum band were playing with might and main, and suddenly all the engines at the station added their quota to the turmoil, by screaming loudly. I soon met the Governor's coachman leading his horses fully harnessed, and guessed what had happened. The excited crowd had taken out the horses and were pulling Sir Walter Hely Hutchinson in triumph up Church Street. The drapers' shops were crowded with people buying up every bit of red, white, and blue ribbon in the place, and every flag that could be found. The place was like a carnival gone mad, and in the midst of it all tears kept coming to my eyes, for those who have given their lives for this great day, and for the many homes left desolate."

A sad contrast to this rejoicing was given me in the next letter. "Yesterday I was in No. 11 ward at the camp hospital, and I shall always now think of it as the agony ward. There were five or six men in it who had been wounded in the head, and I wrote several letters for those

who were able to dictate, to the accompaniment of blood-curdling moans and piteous cries of 'Sister, Sister, help me.' One man's letter could only be written during his short intervals of consciousness. The worst case I shall never forget. It was a poor fellow whose legs had been amputated the previous day, and who was in agonies of pain. To ease him the nurse and an orderly tried to change his position. I happened to have just finished a letter for a man close by, and having some eau de Cologne with me went up to the bed to see if I could do anything. In moving him the pain became unbearable, and the poor sufferer screamed at the top of his voice. The awful sounds went on for several minutes, that seemed hours. I had never before heard a human being scream in mortal agony, and I cannot describe the sickening horror of it. I would have given anything to put my hands to my ears and rush away, but I could not, surrounded as I was by the poor fellows tied to their own beds of suffering and unable to move. I stood with the tears pouring down my face, as they do now at the recollection.

"Oh, if you hear people at home talking of peace before the Boers are thoroughly crushed, or of making too easy terms with them afterwards, try and tell them of the awful sufferings that must come all over again unless the measures taken now are final. I have had the horrors of the battles told me over and over again by men who had been in them only a few days earlier. I cannot go out into the streets without seeing numbers of men armless, legless or blind, and yet I know it would be better to go on in spite of these spoiled lives, than to patch up a peace that cannot last."

My sister wrote this nine years ago, and I am as convinced now as I was then of the truth of what she says. We may forget our past lessons and give up all that our

soldiers died to win for us, but the day of reckoning will come. We have duties, too, to our fellow-countrymen in South Africa, many of whom afforded us noble help when we most wanted it, and we give them in return the choice of living under alien rule in a land they helped to conquer, or of giving up their all and waiting for the day when the fighting and the suffering will come all over again, and South Africa will be once more drenched in blood and tears.

During the first months of the war Maritzburg was not only thronged with the troops passing through, and invalids coming down from the front, but by refugees who had been driven from their homes up-country by the invading Boers. Many of the wives of officers up at the front came out from England to be near their husbands, and they with many of the staff officers and of the Army Medical Corps were crowded in the hotels and boarding-houses. Even in that time of strain and anxiety, lighter things sometimes happened to relieve the gloom, though, perhaps, one can hardly call one officer's experience "amusing." He was resting quietly in his room in the dusk after a hard day, when he saw his landlady come in, and taking up his whisky bottle, put the neck to her mouth and enjoy a good long drink, entirely unconscious of the presence of the bottle's rightful owner. Neither, perhaps, was another incident that happened to three friends of my sister without its unpleasant side at the moment. Two of these friends were daughters of an officer who was shut up in Ladysmith, and were in a boarding-house in Maritzburg. They were terrified at lightning, and one night, during an awful thunderstorm, they flew to the room of another visitor, and entreated her to let them stay with her. As soon as the storm abated a little, they began to talk, and were all feeling more cheerful, when a sudden crash

in the room itself sent all three for refuge under the bed-clothes. "We thought that at least a thunderbolt had fallen," one of them remarked when telling the story, "but it was only some soda-water bottles that had exploded simultaneously under the bed." In those crowded times, boarders had no place for any private property but in their bedrooms, and it was quite usual to keep such things as soda-water bottles under the bed!

A very enterprising friend had a sad experience in trying to make both ends meet, while the necessities of life were at famine prices. Her husband was at the front, and she had her young family with her in a tiny house at Maritzburg. She resolved to set up an incubator, and rosy visions of the money to be made by the coming chicks floated before her eyes. She was determined to make the enterprise succeed, and day and night she was constant in her attention. All went well, and to keep her precious incubator out of the way of the Kafir servants, she established it in her own room. At last, in the middle of the night, the chicks hatched out, and then the dreadful thought occurred that no foster mother had been provided. A hen was procured hastily from the fowl house, but oblivious of the duties required of her, refused to have anything to do with the chirping strangers. One after the other the wretched chicks died, to the dire disappointment of their owner, who had taken so much trouble to bring them into the world.

People cannot help having frivolous moments even under the most trying circumstances, and at Maritzburg sweeps were started on the date of the relief of Ladysmith. One of these cases was severely rebuked by an official who knew—none better—how things must stand in the besieged town. Overhearing his daughters and some



subalterns betting carelessly with one another over the probable date, and a day mentioned not very far off, he remarked sternly: "You may put that date aside. If our troops are not in before then, the Boers will be, for there is not food enough to last." The rebuke must have quieted the lively party, for it was as well justified as a remark made by a commissariat officer, who said that the loss of so many of the garrison at Nicholson's Nek had saved Ladysmith! The town could not have held out till relief came had all those men remained to be fed.

## CHAPTER XII

### AT CLOSE QUARTERS

DURING the rest that our troops had after Ladysmith was relieved my sister's husband was able to run down and see her at Maritzburg. He suggested that when he rejoined Thorneycroft's at Ladysmith, Maggie should follow him there as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made. She succeeded in getting a pass, with the proviso that she should only take up 50 lbs. weight of baggage, and left for Ladysmith on the evening of March 20th, 1900. Her last act before she started was to go to the camp and say good-bye to her soldier friends, who all expressed the greatest regret at her departure.

Travelling in war time in Natal was hardly a joke. Maggie reached Ladysmith before daylight, and had to wait in the station till it was possible to get a truck for her luggage, that I fear was scarcely within the stipulated amount. Luckily there were always officers in charge of the stations, and my sister was well looked after, a chair was provided for her, and the use of the military cart offered. At last it was light enough to make a start, and though she could not get in at the "Royal" Hotel, where she had wired for a room, and found the "Crown" also full up, she came to anchor at "The Nest," a boarding-house that had been occupied by several war correspondents during the siege.

She writes: "Poor Stevens did not live here, though he was often at the house. No shell fell actually into the house, but the landlady was much shocked one day to see

an artilleryman, standing in the next garden, killed by one. That was the only day that she ever took refuge in the caves dug out on the river banks, for she was unnerved by the terrible sight. The English church, three doors above us, had two bits of masonry knocked away by shells, and numberless houses have jagged holes in them, but the place is by no means the heap of ruins that one would expect. I have seen the holes made by a shell just inside the 'Royal,' where poor Mr. Stack was killed."

When dining at the "Royal" with her husband, on the evening after her arrival, Maggie met some old friends—Major—now Colonel Sir Charles—Bruce and his wife, who had both been through the siege. Mrs. Bruce told my sister that though she kept in good health all the time she was living on horse and biscuit, and not too much of that, she became ill directly she returned to ordinary food, scanty as the supply was. Many people, indeed, said the same thing, and some of our saddest losses were from enteric, not contracted during the siege, but after it was over.

There was considerable trouble about my sister being allowed to stay for more than a few days in the place, as it was so unhealthy. Provisions were still being brought in with difficulty, for the bridge over the Tugela was only fit for trains to pass over, the day before she went up. Besides the Ladysmith people, too, there were 50,000 of Sir Redvers Buller's men to be fed. However, the matter was settled by her husband getting a severe attack of dysentery, and his wife being allowed to stay and nurse him. At first, however, he was sent to the Tin Hospital, that lay two miles outside the town.

This hospital was sadly different to those at Maritzburg. It was our most advanced field hospital, and the Boers were still only a few miles distant. The description my

sister gave me was heart-rending: "There are no such things as sheets, or even pillows or cushions, and the poor fellows have nothing but bundles of their own clothing to rest their heads on. And the food !!!—condensed milk and the poorest soup for those unable to eat solids, and for the rest, half a loaf served out with a dry piece of cheese. One man showed me the rations he had been given, and as he had only just been put on solid food, he was naturally unable to eat them. The only other item was a lump of tough meat that had been boiled down for soup. No fruit, no vegetables, no cocoa, no bovril, no comfort of any description. The only thing of which a fair amount was to be had was stimulants. There are very few nurses, the nursing being done mostly by orderlies. The doctors tell me that the truth is they have not accommodation for 200 patients, and they have to take in 400. The other day I took out a large cushion that fortunately I had with me, as well as your two heaviest soldier books and your two remaining soldier pictures. I thought I should have fainted in the heat and dust on the way, but I managed to get my load out somehow."

My sister was so distressed at the state of things at the Tin Hospital that she volunteered to help nurse, but there were so many formalities to be gone through, that she left Ladysmith before they were concluded. Indeed, she had her hands full without any hospital nursing, for she arranged for her husband to return to her care at her rooms. She had, indeed, a very sad time there. Before her husband had recovered from his illness, she went down with influenza, but, in spite of all, she did not forget her soldier friends at the hospital. She got a brother officer of her husband's to go out there for her, and as soon as she was well enough she renewed her own visits. The thanks of the poor sufferers for the papers she took



them were quite pitiful, their delight in them showing the dreadful monotony of their lives. A friend of ours at home, Mrs. Lythall, who is now dead, had joined with me in sending out a little present of money to be expended in getting a few possible comforts for the patients. My sister had great discussions with the men as to how they would like it to be expended, and finally cigarettes for all were decided on, and a few dainties to tempt the appetites of the convalescents. It was unfortunately impossible to procure eggs or milk, or, indeed, anything that would have been best for them, but a little change in diet was a great treat. It was quite a lively time in the hospital when the good things were distributed, and the men declared it was "like Christmas." Happily, after this, supplies came in more plentifully, and the state of things at the hospital improved rapidly.

My sister heard much about the experiences during the siege from those who had been through it. The doctors had the saddest tale. They told her they could not bear to go to the hospital, where the men were craving, and many of them dying, for want of the food they could not give them. Of course, during the siege, all the milk and eggs that were to be had were commandeered for the use of the sick, but the supply was pitifully inadequate to the demand. One woman told Maggie that at last only one of her hens would lay, but a soldier was told off every day to come for the one egg, and he would wait solemnly outside the hen house and then march off with it to the hospital. The poor horses, too, had had a terrible time. When there was no longer any food for them, an immense number of cavalry horses were turned loose, in the hope of their making their way outside and finding food for themselves. But the poor things only raced through the streets, and then, hearing the bugle call,



NATAL BORDER POLICE.



galloped to the parade ground and formed into line. Then the soldiers were ordered to drive them away, and one evening Maggie's landlady met a sad-looking trooper who was leading his horse, and she asked him what he was doing. He told her that his horse had come back to quarters again and again, and he had been ordered to beat it away. He could not bear to do so, for he loved the animal, so he was leading it down to a kraal by the river to leave it there for the night. The end of the tale I do not know, but I hope the man shot the faithful creature.

Of her visit to the cemetery, Maggie writes: "Among many, many others I saw the graves of Commander Egerton, Colonel Dick Cunningham, Mr. Stevens, Major Taunton and Lord Ava. Each grave was just marked with a plain wooden cross, inscribed with the name and date." In the same letter she says: "A Mrs. Allinson here had an awful experience. She was watching the Carbineers who were exercising their horses, when down came a shell in their midst, killing five men and wounding seven and killing thirteen of the horses. Mrs. Allinson herself was not touched, but was literally covered with blood and the remains of the bodies that had been blown to fragments." No wonder my sister remarks: "Oh, this terrible, terrible place, it gets on my nerves."

One day Ladysmith was roused by the exciting sound of big guns. "Boom after boom began between 7.30 and 8 o'clock, and in rushed the small daughter of the house to ask me if I heard the guns, while Tim came in from the veranda to tell me that an engagement was taking place at Elands Laagte. This place is only seventeen miles away, and we had a couple of hours of intense excitement, the big guns going all the time. The sound was so clear we could distinguish between the Dutch Long



Tom and our own naval guns. We could not help smiling at our landlady, who said crossly : ‘ Well, I *did* think I had heard the last of that old brute,’ as Long Tom’s roar was heard above the other Boer guns. At every boom we wondered how many lives it had cost, and we were thankful to learn later that only two of our dear Naval Brigade and one soldier had been killed in the engagement.” My brother-in-law had the vexation of seeing his regiment march past the house where he was in Ladysmith, on their way to Elands Laagte, and he was not able to join them there for several days.

Directly Tim was able to go back to the front my sister went down to Colenso, and from there she tells me of a sad time. “ For miles round the country is one vast battlefield. Never, even at Ladysmith, did I so completely realise the appalling number of men we have lost. I am thankful to say that I have never come across an unburied British soldier, but I saw a dead Boer still lying where he fell. The Dutch, when they made their last great stand before we got through to Ladysmith, had not time to see to their dead, and many bodies were covered so lightly, owing to the hard state of the ground, that they cannot be said to be buried at all. I have seen two bodies with such a light covering of stones over them that in each case a hand stood right out from between the stones, apparently clutching the air in a most ghastly manner. Wherever possible crosses were put up over our men, some of which have inscriptions painted upon them quite nicely, while others are pathetic little crosses knocked up out of boxes, with names scratched or cut on them, that in most cases are already illegible. Perhaps most pathetic of all were the graves that had been made so hastily that they were only marked by the dead man’s helmet and canteen being placed on them. One grave I saw with a helmet on

it and a cross made of cartridges. I would not have touched it for anything, but I fear that when tourists are allowed up, these graves will soon be desecrated."

At that time in all towns near the front one was constantly being challenged by sentries, and when my sister was posting the letter from which I have just quoted, late in the evening, she was challenged. Having neglected to get the countersign she ran some risk, but the sentry was kind, and Maggie was escorted home by two Dublin Fusilier subalterns, who were armed with a lantern. I fancy that my sister's energy in walking knocked up some of her friends pretty completely, and one man returned so exhausted from an expedition, on which she had set her heart, that he must have thought fighting the Boers light work in comparison.

Returning to Maritzburg, my sister established herself there for the winter, glad of a rest after the fatigues of the past weeks. When Tim, shortly after she reached Maritzburg, had a short sick leave, they went together to Durban and spent their time chiefly in fishing. At Maritzburg she had many friends, and among them a dear dog named Waif, who was in the boarding-house where she stayed. Waif had a history. He was a half-bred St. Bernard, and it was supposed that he had fallen from some steamer passing Durban, for a half-drowned pup was washed on to the Back Beach there, and thrown literally at the feet of a man who brought him back to life and kept him. The dog used to accompany Maggie on her long walks, and always devoted himself to her whenever his master was absent.

The visits to the camp hospital were resumed, and the strange assortment of papers I sent out were distributed among the patients. People from all parts of England, whose very names I did not know, supplied me with all

sorts of strange papers to send out, and in my parcels parish magazines and the "Pink 'Un" often jostled one another. The latter paper proved a most disconcerting possession to my sister on one occasion. She was dining with some friends of rather old-fashioned and severe tastes on the evening on which my packet of papers reached her. She took the parcel with her, knowing how keen everyone was to see the English papers. After dinner there was a rush for them, and as Maggie tore off the wrapper, the "Pink 'Un," in all its blushing beauty, fell at her feet. Her hostess's face was expressive, and it was in vain that Maggie explained the papers were sent for distribution to the soldiers. She knew that her hostess always had suspicions that the "Pink 'Un" was her own pet paper.

Parcels of clothes and other comforts for the convalescents were also given me by friends at home, and they were badly wanted, for the men suffered greatly from the cold when the winter months began. Two of the Boer wounded prisoners came in for a tin of tobacco that my friend, Miss Adey—now Mrs. Burridge—had sent out. After Maggie had distributed her little gifts one day, she was told about these men by the doctor in charge, who said that both had been wounded severely and had been in the hospital a long time. The men were most grateful for the gift. One of the doctors told Maggie that when these Boer prisoners were brought in he witnessed an amusing scene. He was at some little distance, and the men had no idea he was there. As soon as the Boers had been left in their beds, one of them looked slowly round the ward, and when he saw an English soldier in a bed near him, a grin spread over his face. The Tommy's eyes lighted up in recognition, and he gave an answering grin. Still smiling, the Boer said: "And where iss my monish, and where iss my coat, and where iss my boots?" "Ah,

my boy," answered the Englishman, "it's more than those you would have lost if our Captain hadn't come up just then."

It was about this time that the forces of Lord Roberts and Sir Redvers Buller met, and my brother-in-law being sent forward to join the advanced guard of Lord Roberts' army, was actually the first link between the troops who had been working so many months to join hands. Soon after Thorneycroft's had a lively skirmish with the Boers, of which my sister told me in her husband's words. "I had charge of the troop," Tim wrote, "and I was sent up to hold one side of a hill, with another company on my right. I had just dismounted my men, when the Boers opened fire on us with a pompom. This caused the right to fall back in some confusion, but happily my fellows held their ground. I got them to the top of the hill, and held it till the artillery came into position. The Boers then moved off. I lost two horses killed and three wounded, one very badly, but the Colonel told me on our return that we had done splendidly. The men certainly behaved grandly, as we were left alone under a heavy fire of rifle, shell and pompom for a good half hour."

Tim had sent down his Queen's Chocolate Box to his wife, and after many vicissitudes in the hands of amateur postmen it reached her at Maritzburg, and she packed it off to me to take care of. A friend of hers told her an anecdote of Prince Christian Victor, who came down to the place during the winter. An R.A.M.C. officer happened to be at the station to meet a patient by the 3.30 a.m. train, and saw Prince Christian, who told him that he had come down from the front to stay for a few days with the Governor. The Prince would not hear of disturbing them at Government House at such an



unseemly hour, but hunted out an empty carriage that was standing in the station, and there spent the rest of the night. Everyone who knew him liked the Prince, who was always courteous and thoughtful of others, and his death was deeply regretted.

In September, Tim was able to run down to Maritzburg on leave for a few days, and on his return to his regiment, then in the Heidelberg and Standerton district, Maggie went with him as far as Ladysmith, hoping to be allowed to go further on before long. For some time her husband had been anxious to get her up to one of the towns in Northern Natal, where she would be nearer him, but the Boers were so active just then, cutting the railway line near Newcastle and threatening further invasions, that no one was allowed up except for some special reason. Ladysmith was indeed different to what it had been a few months earlier. Then 50,000 men had been camped in and around the town, but in September it was a dreary desert. My sister only stayed there while she was arranging about a pass. It was about the middle of October that she went on to Newcastle, having arranged to be taken in at the convent. Here she found a most unexpected party of guests assembled. Not only were several officers' wives staying there, but in some cases the husbands had been taken in as well, as the hotels were more than full.

Tim's regiment, after very hard work, was taking a rest, first at Heidelberg and then at Standerton, but my sister's plan of getting to him was constantly being overthrown. "Here is a nice thing to happen! The railway is blown up again between here and Ladysmith, the telegraph lines are destroyed, and we are cut off from all communication down the line from Washbank, where the catastrophe has occurred. It really is too bad of the

Boers to be so annoying. We first suspected that something was wrong yesterday, when the train that comes up every evening with ice, fruit, etc., generally known as the 'Banana train,' failed to put in an appearance. At dinner we were all a little plaintive because no ice had turned up. In the morning I went to meet the ten o'clock train, as I often do to get my paper, and then I heard the news. The line had been blown up in three places and the station burnt, but no lives were lost and no train injured. We knew the damage must be worse than usual, for they are generally so quick in repairing the line, and it is twenty-four hours since this happened. We now hear that the train that ought to have been here at ten a.m. may be expected any time between midday and six p.m. I returned from the station this morning, paperless, cross and sorely troubled lest my mail letters should not get down to Durban in time to catch this week's boat."

It was at Newcastle that Mr. Jackson was resident magistrate when the war broke out, and the Boers thronged down over Northern Natal. Mr. Jackson refused to leave his post, when most of the English residents left Newcastle for safer parts of the colony. When the Boers took possession of the little town they sent for him, and the leader said: "I understand that you were the Resident Magistrate of Newcastle." "*I am* the Resident Magistrate," corrected Mr. Jackson, but, as he laughingly told my sister, the Boers took it out of him, by packing him and his wife off in a crowded carriage to Pretoria.

During the first Boer War, when there were grave fears that the Boers were in possession of Newcastle, Colonel Mansel, then an inspector in the Natal Mounted Police, went cautiously there at night to find out the real state of the case. Approaching Mr. Rider Haggard's house, he

left his horse and advanced noiselessly to one of the windows. Raising himself up he looked in. As he did so a maidservant was in the act of closing the shutters, and seeing a man's head pop up, she took it to be that of a Boer, and shrieked good vigorous British shrieks that at all events told the invader the house was not in Dutch hands. There was great commotion inside, but the household were soon reassured that they were not surrounded by the enemy.

Almost directly after the mishap to the line below Newcastle another happened above the town. This delayed the news from the front, and my sister was getting anxious, when a letter sent by hand reached her from her husband. When writing to me she says: "The trooper had been delayed on the way, as the line has been blown up between here and Standerton. Tim tells me he has secured a pass for me, and wants me to go to Standerton as soon as possible. The trooper, who evidently adores Tim, asked me as soon as I had read the letter: 'Will you start this afternoon, ma'am? Mr. Steer will be so pleased to see you.' But I thought that I would rather wait till I knew that the line had been repaired. I do hope the Boers will not hold up my train, for I am taking up lots of things, like cakes, biscuits, etc., etc., to say nothing of my frocks."

After innumerable wires and hurried preparations, Maggie at last got off. "Such an interesting journey," she tells me. "Sometimes a convoy passing along the road, with a tremendous escort, sometimes big guns. On the way I saw a perfect picture of peace and war. I was looking out on one side of the carriage where a white man, two horses and some Kafirs were ploughing peacefully. Then a noise made me look out on the other side, and there was a train of big guns drawn by the great

Artillery horses, going along the road. Only the line separated the evidence of war from the little pastoral scene. As we passed Majuba, I looked in triumph at the hill, which six or seven years before I had regarded so sorrowfully.

“At Charlestown there were a lot of people I knew on the platform. They had come simply to see the only up train of the day pass through, and I received many congratulations on being able to get into the Transvaal. Just before we reached Standerton, and while our train was simply crawling along, so great is the caution used, I saw an engine and two or three overturned carriages lying by the side of the line, and many broken sleepers, etc. They were the remains of the accident that had delayed my start, at least if you can call a deliberate wrecking of a train an accident. I looked apprehensively for graves, but there were not any, for though the driver had been killed the body was taken on. The Boers had pulled up the line and then decamped, and of course they had been successful in throwing the first train that passed off the line. As we went along I often saw the blackened ruins of a farmhouse, and every station bristled with soldiers. Every now and then I caught sight of guns mounted on hills near, and I kept thinking proudly, ‘But you can’t get away from them guns.’ We *are* making a huge demonstration in the conquered republics just now.

“I reached this place about 5.30; a thunderstorm that had been raging for over two hours, kindly clearing off as I arrived. Tim was on the platform in his war-worn clothes. He had brought his batman and orderly, and a small army of black boys, as well as an army cart for my luggage, and a carriage that had been lent by one of his fellow officers. He had made every possible arrangement



for my comfort, and was in the greatest spirits at getting me up.

“Though the one hotel is nothing but a pot-house, and everything is of the roughest, they are all most anxious to do everything they can to make me comfortable. Colonel Thorneycroft has gone down to Maritzburg and Durban for a week or two, and has left Tim in sole charge of the horse lines. He has a good staff of non-coms. and men under him, and enjoys his work. The adjutant is the O.C. *pro tem.* and he has placed the carriage and pair at my disposal! I find that the regiment is to rest here for a month, half of both officers and men being away on leave in turn. After this the whole regiment is to go on a barge, as they call it, and this means that an expedition is planned to split up and harry the Dutch commandoes. Lord Kitchener has stipulated that when the regiment leaves, I am to return to Natal.

“Of course one of the first things was to report my arrival to the Provost-Marshall, and I managed to get a pass, so that I can go outside if I want to. The P.-M. implored me, however, not to go out of sight of the outposts, and Tim is equally impressive about the necessity of answering a challenge immediately, if I should ever be out alone at dusk. The sentries fire at once, and several accidents took place at Heidelberg through people not being quick enough in replying. Life is certainly exciting out here, and the other day we heard heavy firing going on, and knew that General Rundle’s column, that was coming in for supplies, was being engaged. When the column arrived, I watched it coming in looking like a huge snake. Two officers of the Manchesters, who lunched with us, said that they had fought all the way here, and the Manchesters alone had lost one officer and several men. A strong force of our men has gone out to hold some

positions while General Rundle's men are here, and we soon heard that the former had been engaged and suffered some losses. Now, Rundle's column having swept the place of supplies, like locusts, have departed, and we are expecting our men back.

"I must tell you about our house, for we really have one. Soon after my arrival we went to the chief magistrate to see if we could commandeer a house, as we could have done in Heidelberg. We were very fortunate, for the magistrate at once placed a most convenient one at our disposal. It is only about a quarter of a mile from the horse lines, and is at present occupied by a Boer woman whose husband is out on commando. As I could not bear to turn her out, I have made an arrangement with her for the use of three rooms and their scanty furniture, and for her to cook for us, for which we are to pay her £1 a week. The landlord of the hotel has offered us the loan of any amount of furniture for £1, so our arrangements are quite palatial.

"The soldier servants and the black boys each have a tent in the ground—I cannot call it a garden—that is fenced in round the house. Tim's four horses also graze there, and I am obliged to expostulate at their bales of forage, etc., littering up the front veranda. My household is picturesque, but trying to my skill and patience to manage. It is nice to have a white servant to wait at meals, bring in tea and answer the door, but beyond these duties the soldiers are hardly any good at all. There is absolutely no comparison between the irregular soldier servants, such as these, and the regular ones. This is the sort of thing that goes on. 'Bond, I have finished with the flowers on the veranda.' 'Yes, ma'am, I will find one of the boys to clear them away.' Then again: 'Ray, Mauser,' my sister's horse,

‘has pulled up his picket and is loose.’ ‘Oh, yes, ma’am, directly I can get hold of one of the boys I will send him to water.’ Not a thing will they do, if they can get Moses or Jacob to do it for them. All the same, we have five servants—if I include Mrs. Louw—to look after Tim and myself. Mrs. Louw cooks for us all, and is not expected to do anything else, the men and boys being responsible for the housework. I should fare badly, however, if the Dutch woman did not come to the rescue, and look after my bedroom for me.”

After the Standerton days my sister had reason to change her views as to the value of irregular soldier servants, for her husband had two orderlies who proved invaluable.

“The feeding of my household is not easy. The rations that come every day are a tremendous help, as everything is at famine prices; but, oh! the bother of seeing that they all come right. Still I am very happy, and we have had our first dinner party. Tim informed me the other day he had asked a man to dine with us, and we accordingly looted from the stores of comforts for the soldiers a few large white new pocket-handkerchiefs, and I set to work to hem two yards of sheeting for a tablecloth. Another man was also our guest, and in spite of a wretched scraggy fowl that I succeeded in getting after much difficulty and at an exorbitant price, and a scratch meal generally, we all enjoyed ourselves. The entertainment, indeed, was nothing in comparison to our straits at the hotel, when I entertained the General. Just as everything had been put up for the move here, an A.D.C. arrived to say that the General, who was in Standerton for a few hours, was coming to see me. I wish you could have seen the party. We had to receive him in our bedroom, as the hotel sitting-room was filled

with German Jews. So our visitor sat on the bed and drank whisky and soda out of Tim's service mug. Tim was perched on a box, and I had the only chair. As we all talked at once we had no time to think of minor discomforts.

"Our day is something like this. One of the black boys appears about 5.15 a.m. to fetch Tim's accoutrements to clean. Then early coffee comes, and about 6.15 Tim's horse is brought round, and he goes off until about 8 o'clock. We breakfast as soon as he is back, and he generally stays with me till 11, when he returns to the lines. He is back by 1, and at 4.30 goes again to the lines for about an hour, and work is finished for the day. I often go with Tim to see the horses, of which there are several hundred under his care. There is a good deal of trouble over the sick horses, as the sergeant whose duty it is to see after them is too fond of sending them off to the sick lines, instead of looking after them himself. The objection to this is, that when the horses are sent there they do not come back to us, but go on to the remount lines. The other day I was much amused at Tim's remark: 'If Rose was here how useful she would be. She should have a line of sick horses to look after, with five or six men under her, and she would keep the fellows up to the work, I know.' I laughed all the way home at the idea of you in charge of the sick horses, and squabbling with the sergeant over them.

"Have I told you that I found our house was destitute of china, plate, and cutlery, so Tim had to borrow from the mess? There is not a scrap of carpet in either the bedroom or dressing-room, and we only possess one sheet that has a counterpane as its fellow! We are, indeed, most primitive, but nevertheless are having a good time. The regiment clamours for Jack"—my sister's little son



left in England—"for they say they want a regimental baby!

"Last Sunday Tim and I had a most exciting drive. He wanted to find a vet. who lives in a farm just within our extreme outposts, and neither he nor the driver knew the way. As desultory fighting goes on round the place all the day, and we were not only beyond the outposts, but sometimes out of sight of them, for about a mile we were liable to be held up at any moment. Tim did not even bring his revolver for fear of being tempted to use it, and thus bringing fire on me. I was furious with him when I found it out, for we should have looked small if we had been held up by *one* Boer. However, nothing happened, and we were received most politely by a Boer and his family at one farm we went to before we found the right one.

"Oh, dear, tragedy and comedy do come very close together out here. The detachment sent out to keep General Rundle's outposts has returned, and one man has brought me a lot of pompom shells, that will make delightful flower vases for the dinner table"—still in use in 1909—"he also gave me six eggs (!), and said that he could have looted a saddle for me, had he known that one could not be found in Standerton. He and another officer got hold of a Cape cart and pair of horses, and this they have put at my service. After only twenty-four hours in the place the detachment went out on another barge.

"The other morning, when Tim returned to breakfast, he told me that at 4 a.m. every available officer and man had gone out to engage the Boers a few miles off. He being in charge of the horse lines could not leave during the colonel's absence. Before we had finished breakfast we heard the guns going, so we went out to the top of a

kopje near to watch the engagement. We could see our men splendidly and our two big guns, but the Boers were out of sight, and to my great disappointment we could not see the shells burst, as they were directed over the crest of a low hill. It was exciting, though, to see the puff of smoke and hear the report, and to watch our men wheeling and deploying, and doing all sorts of things. The force got back in the afternoon, with the loss of only one man wounded and some horses killed. The Boer loss is unknown.

“One day I had a bright little tea party, in spite of the fact that all my visitors had come straight from a brother officer’s funeral. It is not that we are heartless, but deaths are, alas, so common that we could never get on at all, if we did not put them as far as possible out of our thoughts and go on as usual. Now we were all genuinely grieved, yet immediately after the funeral we were laughing and talking as if nothing had happened.

“Last Thursday, about 3.30, I was just going out to post your mail letter, when I saw from my window a most remarkable looking party of ladies coming up to the house. I decided that they must be visitors for Mrs. Louw, and had come to the front of the house by mistake. However, in a few minutes the landlady arrived with a grin, to tell me that ‘some ladies had come to call.’ On going into the sitting-room I found four Dutch women, two of whom I believe belong to shops here, and the others were their friends. Their dress and all about them was funny in the extreme, but I could not enjoy their visit properly as I was wondering how I should ever get to the post. While I was talking to them I felt something move under my skirts and giving them a shake promptly, out jumped a mouse. Oh, if you could have seen my visitors. They were far from sylph-like in figure, and how they skipped to get out

of the reach of the dreadful enemy. One, a dame of massive build, sprang to a chair with the most astonishing agility. As soon as calm was restored, we returned to conversation, and just as my patience was giving out altogether, Tim came in. Having performed the necessary introductions I called up my sweetest smile, and said, 'I am so sorry that I have an engagement, but I am sure it will give my husband the greatest pleasure to pour out tea for you,' and I departed gracefully, with, I am afraid, something very like a wink at the flabbergasted Tim. Off I went to make my toilet, laughing all the time, while Tim was in possession with the Dutch ladies.

"Presently up came a great friend of Tim's, who had just arrived from Heidelberg. I heard Tim take him into the sitting-room, and then he meanly left him to entertain the ladies, and came to my room almost apoplectic between amusement and wrath. I refused firmly, however, to go back, and suggested that the latest arrival should join me on the veranda. This Tim would not hear of, as if he had to act host, he meant his young friend to assist him. Not long after the bevy of beauty departed and we had a great laugh. I was punished for my base conduct by having cold tea, as Bond did not look propitious as to making fresh for me. Tim and his friend's tea party to the youth and beauty of Standerton is now the joke of the place."

The little ménage in the tiny Dutch house was broken up suddenly owing to the orders that reached the T. M. I. to entrain as quickly as possible for the south border of the Orange River Colony. Colonel Thorneycroft rejoined his regiment, and to add to the confusion, as far as my sister was concerned, the Dutch owner of the house was given permission to return. Two other houses were put at her disposal, but the conditions of her pass did not allow her to remain, and she arranged to go back to Natal. All was,

of course, bustle and confusion from one end of the place to the other. "We have indeed had a busy time," she wrote to me. "At 2.30 on Friday morning we had our coffee, and then Tim had an hour's hard work seeing to the baggage being packed on a cart to go to the station. He went off to the main camp at 3.30, leaving the servants still hard at work, and about 4 o'clock they got off. Such a cavalcade! The soldier servants and the black boys were all mounted and leading Tim's horses, and as I watched the start in the grey dawn I felt pretty sad. I had Pompom"—a mongrel toy dog given to Maggie by her landlady Mrs. Louw, before she had left for one of the concentration camps—"and he and I were to be up at the station at 5 a.m. Tim's company went in the third or fourth of the seven trains required to take the regiment.

"What a sight it was when I reached the station. I was just in time to see the train before Tim's move off, the Colonel having gone in the first at 4 a.m. Then another train moved in, and it took two hours to get all the horses and mules entrained. Tim and the other officers worked like Trojans, but one of them always managed to be with me, trying to keep my spirits up. They were good, and I do not think I was left alone for one minute. About 6.30 Tim and I and a friend of his, to whose care I was confided when Tim started, went to have some breakfast. Such a funny half-tearful, half-hilarious meal it was, and at seven the last horse, mule and soldier were in their places, the officers got into a large compartment, something like a guard's van, that had been reserved for them, and the start was made.

"I had to go back to the house to see about the furniture being returned to the hotel, and as soon as this was accomplished I went off to the telegraph office. Here I persuaded the soldier telegraphist to send off some



wires for me, though the office was really only open for military purposes. I had, however, to arrange about the forwarding of my letters and to engage a room at Dundee. This done a friend arrived in great excitement to tell me that one of our trains had been fired on soon after it left. I thought immediately of what Tim had said to me only the night before. When he came in after a last look round to give directions to the orderlies, he exclaimed: 'I believe that —— is signalling from his house on the hill by flashlights, and I suppose the result will be we shall be fired on, or the line will be up to-morrow.' It was not Tim's train that had been fired on, and we had no casualties. Our men had returned the fire, and though the engine was riddled with bullets, they managed to get on to the next station, and were only detained while a fresh engine was procured.

"When I told my visitor of Tim's remark, he was urgent for me to report the matter to the Staff Officer, as he considered it most important information. Before I had decided what to do, news came in of another disaster. A train of remount horses had been held up only three miles out of Standerton, and a hundred and thirty horses had been carried off by the Boers. I now decided to tell my tale to the Staff Officer, who of course passed it on to the General. I did not know what view they took of the matter till just as I was starting for the station, when the Staff Officer rushed up in search of me, and said that the General wished me to delay my journey for twenty-four hours. I was in despair, for I had nowhere to stay, and at last I was taken to the Civil Commissioner and the magistrate, and after making a deposition was allowed to leave. The authorities were very careful about taking down my address, so that they might know just where they could find me if they should wish to communicate

with me, but thank goodness, I have heard no more of the affair."

During the confusion of the last days at Standerton poor little Pompom disappeared. After a great deal of trouble my sister discovered that he was in the hands of the Dutchman who had given him to her landlady. This man promised to restore him and bring him to the station when Maggie was leaving, but he did not turn up, and though a friend of my sister's, who was staying on for some days at Standerton, did his best to find the dog, Pompom was never heard of again.

## CHAPTER XIII

### EXCITING TIMES

ON her journey down to Dundee my sister was escorted as far as Glencoe by one of the T. M. I. officers who was going to Ladysmith to see about monuments being put up at Spion Kop. This was a melancholy duty on which many of our friends were engaged at this time. Some little time earlier she had met Miss Woodgate, who was having a stone put up to her brother, General Woodgate, and when she met this friend again the latter was engaged on the same duty for her nephew, who had been killed near Vryheid. Another friend also, an officer in the T. M. I., was returning to England shortly, and was anxious to go to Spion Kop and see about a monument being put up to Nevill Hill-Trevor, who had been well known to Maggie, and who had come out from home with her on the *Norman*.

As my sister wished to go to Spion Kop, an expedition thither was planned with this friend and another man whom she went on to Ladysmith to meet. She had first to get a permit to leave and to return to Dundee. The following is her account of the expedition: "It was close on midday before we got off, for there was no end of trouble about a carriage, and then we were told it was quite too late to start for Spion Kop that day. However, we were firm, and with a capital pair of horses we were off at last. It was a strange wild drive, for the road was awful. Our small carriage was as light as it could be to go over such ground, and we had a driver who sent the



ON THE WAY TO VRYHEID.

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horses along recklessly. One of the men was in front beside the coloured driver, and the other two of us were in the back. Here we sat, with our arms holding on to the front seat for every inch of the way. Through spruits and up hill and down dale we flew till we reached the foot of Spion Kop at 2 p.m., a good performance for eighteen miles over such a road.

“Quite close to where we stopped was a nice convenient heap of stones, so one of the men seized our basket of provisions and exclaimed: ‘This is just the thing to lunch upon.’ Our driver’s voice, however, broke in with the remark: ‘That is a Dutch grave, sir,’ and we moved on. We certainly ought to have known, for we have all seen plenty of them, and this one was just like most of the others, but it was rather a gruesome idea. Then we set off up the hill, and you may fancy what sad thoughts crowded upon us as we went. Each of us had lost friends there and, putting aside personal grief, there were the tragic memories of the place where England had lost so many of her best and bravest sons. Just now I am thinking much of our Tommies—badly paid and sometimes suffering dreadful privations, and yet fighting splendidly, though given away over and over again by the folly and incapacity of their leaders. I feel as though my heart would never stop aching when I think of the thousands of graves I have seen between Standerton and Maritzburg. Yet with it all there is triumphant pride in what our men have accomplished.

“There would have been no sign of life on Spion Kop had it not been for the workmen engaged in putting up monuments to the dead. A few private stones were already in place, and I had known nearly all those to whose memory they were erected. We spent about two hours on the hill, picking up some cartridges, bits of shell,

shrapnel, bullets, etc. It was a weird scene, for a thunderstorm came on long before we left the top. As the thunder crashed and rolled all round and the lightning came rather unpleasantly near, I thought it was a splendid requiem service for our dead. We were, of course, soon wet through, but in the intense tragedy of the place I do not think one of us cared a bit. Well, we dried our eyes—at least I did—said a last good-bye to the patient dead, and made our way down the mountain again. Fortunately for us the rain and storm passed, and the light held out for our wild, helter-skelter journey back. We reached Ladysmith by 6 o'clock.

“At the hotel I found myself in rather a predicament. The amount of my luggage was small, my clothes were wet through, and at first I thought that bed would be my only refuge. But in the end I managed to make myself presentable, though I can safely say that a more extraordinary toilet I have never made. We had a very pleasant evening and in the morning my two friends started, the one for India and the other for England. I went off by the goods train, to which a dilapidated first-class carriage had been attached for the convenience of myself and three other passengers. One of the latter, an officer, told me that he had met me at Mooi River, and he was then taking eighty men of the 1st Yorkshires to Bloemfontein, and another, one of the King's Royal Rifles, was dropping detachments of men along the line from Ladysmith to a little beyond Elands Laagte. We crawled along as usual, and at Glencoe, which we reached in pouring rain, I had a long wait in soaking shoes and stockings before the branch line train started. Very glad I was to find myself back again and be welcomed warmly by Mrs. Bird.

“There were five or six officers' wives in Dundee, and

before I left for Spion Kop we had decided to club together and give a dance. We could not, however, fix a date, until we knew when the column that had gone out to Vryheid would return. An official wire has just come that the T. M. I. and South African Light Horse have captured a gun, pompom and stock from the Boers." A few days later she writes: "Our dance has come off and was a tremendous success. There were over fifty officers, for whom we had to provide partners, and we secured every possible—and even impossible—woman in Dundee. The whole thing was most amusing, and at the end our guests gave us hostesses a tremendous cheer, and sang 'For they are jolly good fellows!' Our return drive too was rather exciting. We had come in the Bethune's Mounted Infantry ambulance, and when it came to the return, an amateur whip was most anxious to drive. Mrs. Bird and I preferred a professional to undertake the team of mules in pitch darkness. We had some difficulty in carrying our point, but succeeded in the end, and I got to bed about 4 a.m.

"The success of our dance made the officers of the garrison decide on giving one on Christmas night. We had all received and accepted our invitations and everything was settled, when a squashing wire came down from General Hilliard to the O.C., saying that particular activity on the part of the Boers was to be looked for on that very night, and warning Dundee to be prepared in case of a raid. It was very disappointing, and we had no attack after all."

Dundee was then the centre for many small places, such as Vryheid, Nqutu, etc., where we had garrisons, and convoys were continually going out to these stations. Fighting was always going on all round the town, and the convoys were often fired on, and even engaged heavily on



the way. Early in January, 1901, Maggie wrote: "The convoy to Vryheid went out this morning, with most of the officers and men in the place to escort it, so we shall be rather at the mercy of the Boers—of whom there are plenty between here and Vryheid—for the next eight or nine days. The few officers who are left behind are to spend this evening here, so that I shall be late again."

My sister tells of a tragic little incident in connection with one of the expeditions sent out. "On Monday morning, I stood on the veranda to watch the Volunteer Composite Regiment go by on their way to Utrecht. I smiled as I saw three colonial ladies riding by the side of the men, and evidently going a few miles out with their husbands or sweethearts, and then sighed as I thought how unlikely it was that all the men would come back again. Smiles and tears are always jostling one another out here. That very night one man was brought back dead. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-six, and had not even the glory of falling in action. On the march he had noticed a mule driver in difficulties with his team, and dismounting, he had climbed on the waggon to try his own powers. The mules had bolted, and he was pitched out, the waggon passing over his body and killing him instantaneously.

"This young V. C. R. man had shared a tent with a friend at Dundee. This friend did not form one of the convoy, and knew nothing of the accident when he returned to the tent that night. On entering he was surprised to see his comrade, whom he believed to be on the way to Utrecht, lying on his bed. 'What! you back, old fellow,' he exclaimed, as he bent over the figure. Then he recoiled in horror, for it was a dead man lying before him. The trooper had been brought back to his own tent, and no one had thought of warning the other inmate of what had

happened. It was just twenty-four hours after I had watched the V. C. R. go by, that I noticed a sadly familiar procession pass the house. First the firing party, followed by a gun-carriage with the coffin covered by the Union Jack. Then the led horse with the pathetically reversed boots, and lastly a few regular and irregular soldiers following. It was the funeral of the young fellow whom I had seen among the light-hearted band only the morning before.

“ I hear that a convoy just in from Vryheid has had a skirmish on the way. A Dublin Fusilier sub. told me the particulars. It seems that the Boers attacked our rear guard and the 5th Dragoon Guards had a warm time, but they drove off the Boers with the loss of two killed on the Dutch side and not so much as a horse hurt on ours. There is a constant stream of waggons flowing out to Vryheid just now, for not only has the Vryheid garrison to be supplied but General French's army as well. As far as De Jagers—popularly known as Jaggers—the road is safe, but from there an escort has to be in readiness. A man told me only yesterday what work they have had with the convoys, owing to the heavy roads and flooded rivers. Three span of oxen have to be put to every waggon in crossing the Buffalo, and several men and animals have been nearly lost there. As it has been pouring almost ever since the last convoy started, no wonder that we hear the men are having a dreadful time, and have taken eleven hours to do the same number of miles. I was delighted to see in yesterday's paper that brother Jack ”—Sir John Dartnell—“ has captured a Hotchkiss gun, besides ammunition and stock.

“ I have been for a long expedition, up Imparti, and as I had no idea it was so far I took no luncheon with me. However a kind colonial farmer whom I asked to point

out the place where the Boer gun had been, asked me to go to his farm where his wife, Mrs. Marshall, gave me some delicious tea and bread and butter. The farmer showed me afterwards where the gun had been and pointed out the best way back. It was brought home to me forcibly at the Marshall's farm what trouble this war has brought on the colonial households, even when no member of the family has been killed. It must have been a lovely little place, but now is in a dreadful state, though workmen are hard at work on it. There are views of the Biggarsberg from the windows, and in the distance the grand peaks of the Drachensberg are to be seen. The Marshalls are quite young people, and had only been married five months when the war broke out. They had indeed only just settled down, when the man who is in the Natal Carbineers was called out with the other volunteers, and his wife was sent down the line for safety with the other women and children. They had to leave behind all their furniture and stock, only protected by natives. Their wedding presents and other treasures they buried under the boards of one of the rooms. When they came back not a thing was left. The Boers had taken or destroyed everything. Every window was smashed, all the flooring had been torn up in the search for hidden treasure, and even the ceilings had holes knocked through them. Of course every room was in a state of indescribable filth, and had to be re-papered and painted. That is always the case after the Boers have occupied a place. Well, these people did not grumble at all, but seemed quite pleased at getting 75 per cent. on their claim for loss from the Government. It is hard, though, to lose all one's little treasures, down to every photograph. In most cases people could take next to nothing away with them, and my landlady, for instance, seized her

stamp album and a parcel that had been confided to her care, and saved nothing else except the clothes she stood up in.

"I had a pleasant dinner at the Burrards on Friday, and after dinner we all went to see Captain Burrard feed his pet foal. I thought how you would have loved the little thing. It was only a few hours old when the corps to which the mother belonged was ordered up to the front, and as it was not possible to take so young a creature on the march, it was ordered to be killed. Captain Burrard happened to be at the camp at the time, and, hearing the story, adopted the foal, and has looked after it himself ever since. He feeds it from a bottle just like a baby, and as there was not a baby's bottle to be found in Dundee, he made one out of an ordinary bottle and the finger of a kid glove. It is really most ingenious, and answers admirably. Every morning at two o'clock Captain Burrard gets up to feed it. The foal lives in a tent and was just three days old when I saw it. The little thing popped its head out and opened its mouth directly it heard us coming."

There were many stray animals about the town, and among others that my sister took compassion on was a dog that clung to her most affectionately. In the end Maggie found an excellent master for poor Toby, as he was called. A gunner who was ordered to the Doornberg, a solitary outpost twenty-two miles from Dundee, was bemoaning his lonely fate to her, when she thought of the stray dog, and offered him as a companion. The nice gunner agreed at once, and on the following day Toby was sent off in a cart to his new home. Maggie heard from the officer relieved by Toby's new master, that the dog had arrived safely and was settling down well when he left. So often when my sister saw the ragged, tired



soldiers passing through Dundee, she would notice one of the footsore Tommies carrying a dog. It was wonderful how the men clung to their animals under the greatest possible difficulties.

To quote again from the letters : " When I went to meet Mrs. Bird by an early train to-day, I saw Knox's column passing through on its way to Glencoe. This column has done such good work, and it has the mark of war upon it indeed ! The grimy men were in their war-worn, tattered clothes, but the poor dear horses were not on the whole in bad condition. There were the guns of course, and General Knox rode between four officers. The sight was a stirring one as they marched through. Some of the officers have leave to stay behind here for a day or two, so old friends are constantly turning up at our rooms."

In June that year—1901—Tim went down on duty to Maritzburg, and my sister joined him at Glencoe and went on with him. After a few days spent in Maritzburg they both went on for a brief holiday to Durban, and there they lunched on board the hospital ship, *Nubia*, Colonel Armstrong, P.M.O., being an old friend of theirs. The *Nubia* was to leave for England in a day or two, and there were a few patients already on board, while a trainful of sick and wounded was expected on the afternoon of the day my sister was there. Maggie was greatly struck with the perfection of the arrangements made for the invalids, not a thing seemed lacking that could be provided for their comfort. The only thing, she told me, she did object to, was the presence of the many punkahs that would catch in her hat !

One of my sister's amusements at Durban was to watch the recruiting for irregular troops that went on in the Drill Hall. She and her husband often looked in to see Captain

Hamilton, who was recruiting for Thorneycroft's Horse. "It is an enormous hall," she writes, "and round the sides are any number of tables, behind each of which sits an officer. The advertisement board of his force, that is made as attractive as possible, is put up beside him. The officers remind me of saleswomen at a charity bazaar, anxiously looking for customers. Then a recruit wanders in, or perhaps two or three come and nibble. All the officers are immediately on the alert, and if the new-comers are hooked, say by Lord Tullibardine's Scottish Horse, then the Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, Bethune's Mounted Infantry, Imperial Light Horse, Rimington's Tigers, Railway Pioneers, and I do not know how many more of the Irregular Regiments' officers look disgustedly from behind their tables at the triumphant man who has hooked his fish. It is really most amusing, but the country has been swept so clean, that there are not many recruits left to come in. I remarked to Captain Hamilton that I did not think our advertisement board looked as attractive as those of either Lord Tullibardine's Horse or Rimington's Tigers, and he answered with a most malevolent look at the latter: 'You would not believe how that bit of skin round the hat fetches them. We have lost, and they have gained, dozens of men all through that strip of skin, and it is not tiger skin, only a bit of leopard or cat-skin, after all!'"

My brother-in-law took recruiting officer's duty to relieve Captain Hamilton, but in a few days went down with dengue fever, a particularly bad form of malaria. As soon as he was well enough to be moved, he went into the Convalescent Hospital at Howick, and my sister went into her old rooms at Maritzburg. Here, she too went down with dengue, and before she was well again, Tim rejoined Thorneycroft's in the Orange River Colony, taking a number of recruits with him. He was gazetted a captain

about this time. Before she left Maritzburg my sister found time to get a pass to go to the concentration camp in search of her old Standerton friend, Mrs. Louw. The good Dutch woman was unfortunately out on a shopping expedition, but her family gave their visitor a most warm welcome.

The return journey to Dundee was made as soon as Maggie was fit to travel. Just then the Boers were threatening northern Natal even more than usual, and at Glencoe Maggie met reinforcements of our troops being hurried down to Dundee, and like herself, waiting for the branch line train to the latter place. Two train loads started eventually, the military train carrying the first detachment of the Johannesburg Mounted Rifles going first, and the second one, in which was my sister, following it closely. The six miles of the journey was simply a crawl, and outside Dundee Station the second train was stopped for three-quarters of an hour, while the first was being unloaded. It did not do to be in a hurry when travelling in those days! The rest of the Johannesburg Mounted Rifles were to reach Dundee that day, and the branch line trains were running continually.

My sister's stay in Dundee was short, for she heard that a former landlady of hers was now in charge of a house attached to a store in Nqutu and she determined to go on there. "The post-cart still goes three times a week to Nqutu," she writes, "and the journey is exciting, as the cart is met by a strong armed escort at the Buffalo, to be taken through the dangerous tract of country that lies between the river and Nqutu. It is brought back in the same way, and there is always the chance of its being attacked at any moment by the Boers. Then things happen at Nqutu, for on Tuesday the people there heard the firing in an engagement going on quite near the place.

I mean to go up if possible, for I suppose my luggage could go with a convoy, but the difficulty will be to get permission from the authorities."

Rather to her surprise and much to her delight, Maggie did get her pass, though it was impressed on her that if she went to Nqutu, that lay about twelve miles over the Zulu border, it would be entirely at her own risk. Before her preparations for departure were finished she was dreadfully afraid that her pass would be withdrawn, as Lord Kitchener had wired down that he expected a strong force of Boers under Botha would sweep into Natal within the next few days. Of course, if this happened and a large force of the enemy was known to be between Dundee and Nqutu, the post-cart would not run, or if it did go for military purposes, the escort would be enormous, and no ordinary passengers would be taken. However, all went well, and having sent off her first instalment of luggage by Strachan's waggons, and another lot by Oldacre's waggon, she arranged for the rest to follow by the next convoy.

The day before she herself started for Nqutu, Maggie wrote:—"The Boers are so close in, that they were at Schultz's farm, within four or five miles of Dundee, yesterday evening. They took one of our men prisoner, but returned him unharmed, though minus his arms and accoutrements. I know that this is true, as the officer who told me about it at tea-time was sent to warn all the outposts, as soon as the news came in. Things are kept so quiet that neither of the two other officers, who were also having tea with me, knew that the Boers had been quite so near till this boy told us. We all knew they were at Scheeper's Nek, but that is seventeen miles off, and no one thought they would have the audacity to come close in here. We saw a pretty sight before we left the tea-table. One of my guests exclaimed, 'Look! there



go the guns!' And we looked up to see them dashing down the hill and through the spruit, and disappearing in the direction of Scheeper's Nek. Probably by the time they arrive the Boers will have melted away. Oh, dear, I am very anxious about my things. Imagine how the Boers would gloat over some of my treasures."

The next letter was from Nqutu: "I arrived last evening, wet and chilled, but having quite enjoyed my thirty-six miles post-cart drive. I started yesterday rather depressed by news of a reverse. The tale is that Gough's Mounted Infantry, that I watched go out of Dundee on Sunday, have had three companies taken prisoner, and lost several killed and wounded, among them Colonel Gough, and have also lost two guns. This took place between De Jagers and Scheeper's Nek, on the way to Vryheid. I can only trust the rumour is not true, or that at least it is much exaggerated. Dundee was certainly in a state of buzz when I left. Troops were coming in fast by train, and an armoured train that was at Glencoe early this morning was said to be going on to Dundee. We heard one unmistakable report of a big gun from the direction of Scheeper's Nek when I was in the post-cart yesterday, but we saw nothing of any Boers on the way."

A week later I heard: "I am writing to you sitting up on a camp bed in my tent, with any number of our dear soldiers all round. So close are they that so far as hearing their conversation goes, they might as well be *inside*, for we are very crowded in this small camp. The last two days have been most exciting, and the nights more so, an attack from 2,000 Boers being expected at any moment. However, I must tell you how I came to be here. My first experiences were not exactly lively, and I almost wished that I had not left Dundee. I had to go to

Barklie's, which, though called a hotel, would certainly be described by anyone unaccustomed to the South African up-country stores as a 'mud hovel.' As the weather was bitterly cold, and there was constant rain and sleet, I found my quarters rather trying. My room itself was large and beautifully clean, but the floor was only earth, as it is in all the rooms, with just a square of oilcloth in the middle. The walls too were of mud, and there was no ceiling, only wood rafters and thatch. Had it not been for my little stove, that I brought up with me in the post-cart, as well as the other two comforts of my life—my hot-water bottle and 'British Warm'<sup>1</sup>—I think I should have died of the cold. The people were really very good in looking after me, but I suffered dreadfully. I tried once to write letters, but my hands nearly froze, and I had to stop, though I had my stove going close to me, my feet on the hot-water bottle, the British warm on, and a blanket tucked round me. And this is Africa!

"Nqutu consists of Barklie's Hotel (!!!), the Court House, with the post office and gaol under the same roof, the magistrate's and the doctor's houses, and Strachan's store, where I had hoped to find quarters. The last is a very pretty house, with a charming garden, and that is all the town. Then there is the camp, with some half-dozen officers and about three hundred men. The camp is a bare mile from Strachan's, and about a mile and a half from Barklie's, and is perched on a hill, for all this district is very hilly. (Interruption here owing to the arrival of the orderly who waits on me. He brought a canteen mug of tea in one hand and a plate with two eggs rolling about on it, two pieces of bread and butter, some salt, and a spoon in the other. This constituted my

<sup>1</sup> A short military overcoat, worn by the British troops in South Africa.

breakfast, and, as you will see, such luxuries as egg-cups, trays, or table-cloths are not to be had.)

“To return. I knew two of the officers stationed here before I came, and one of them told me on Thursday, that the bad news I heard before leaving Dundee was only too true. I had met a number of Gough’s Mounted Infantry officers at a dance only a few days before I came away, and for some of them it was their last dance. Oh, dear, is it not all dreadful! It seems that Colonel Gough and his men rode right into an ambush at Blood River Poort, that lies between De Jager’s and Scheeper’s Nek, and all these places are between Dundee and Vryheid. The Boers killed sixteen of Gough’s men, including two or three officers, they wounded thirty, and took more than a hundred prisoners, beside capturing two guns. I am thankful to say that our men had made the guns utterly useless before they fell into the enemy’s hands. The Boers rode right through our men, and only the Colonel and eleven men escaped to tell the tale.” Later on a subaltern in the Dorsets, who had been with Gough’s force, told Maggie of the horrors of that night. He was one of the unlucky prisoners, and after being stripped of everything but their underclothing, they had to walk the eighteen miles to Vryheid barefoot. It was bitterly cold and pouring with rain, and our wounded lay untended on the ground all through the night. To resume my sister’s narrative: “Colonel Stewart, who was only a short distance away from the scene of the encounter, fell back instantly on De Jagers, and thus saved Dundee. By good luck a big movement of our troops was going on just then, and a force was diverted for the protection of Dundee. As I told you troops were pouring into the place when I left, but we little knew how nearly we had fallen into the hands of the Boers that time.”



OX WAGGON TRANSPORT.

*To face p. 304*





## CHAPTER XIV

### ALARMS AND COUNTER ALARMS

FROM the camp at Nqutu my sister continues her narrative: "After I had been at Barklie's for a few days, the weather improved, and I was able to enjoy myself again, and think about plans for the future. Mr. Barklie, who is the same man who had the store at Rorke's Drift, where I stayed seven years ago, told me he had a horse that would carry me well, so I only awaited the arrival of my baggage to arrange a ride. My saddle and some of my things came in all right in Strachan's waggon last Thursday, but my habit has not yet arrived. This was sent by Oldacre's waggon, and when only a few miles out from Dundee I had passed the waggon, and the driver of the post-cart had asked the men in charge when they would get to Nqutu. They said they would not arrive before Monday, as the roads were awful and their oxen very poor and weak, both of which facts were obvious. However, on Friday, Barklie had passed the waggon on his way here, and he had hurried the driver up and told him he must get in on Saturday.

"Sunday arrived, however, without any news of the waggon, and as it was a fine day I was vexed at the non-appearance of my habit. I arranged for a long ride on the Monday, hoping by that time to have my things, and as there was nothing else to be done I lazed philosophically, I had my breakfast in bed and read a good deal, and then dressed leisurely, and actually never noticed that firing was going on quite near. Just as I had put on my hat,

meaning to go for a long walk, a hurried tap came at my door, and Miss Murray, the housekeeper, came in, saying: 'Mr. Barklie has sent me to tell you that the Boers have broken through the native force guarding the borders'—after the disaster to Gough's force, the Zulus had assembled along their border to defend it—'They are now engaged with a Zulu impi about four or five miles away. You can hear the guns'—and so I could, and realised that I had been doing so for some time—'There is the Boer advance guard on the hills,' pointing through my window, 'and there are the Zulus flying in. The Boers are expected here in two or three hours, and Mr. Barklie says that you should hide any valuables you have with you.' Then she vanished.

"This was indeed exciting, and so was the scene outside. Troopers were dashing about, Zulus were flying in from all directions, and the firing was incessant. Natives were collecting cattle hastily, and huge droves were being taken towards the camp. An order came down to Barklie that he was to pack everything he could from his store, and send his waggons in to camp. Then another order arrived that all the women and children in the place were to go up to the camp at once. I had not much to do. The only money I had with me was a £5 note, and this I tucked away, with a few articles of jewellery, inside my dress. I had been warned before I came to make all payments by cheque, as the Nqutu people did not like receiving money for fear of it falling into the hands of the Boers. As soon as I had made my few preparations, I watched the turmoil going on outside. Barklie and his assistants were working hard, burying money and loading up the waggons, and I thought sadly of my lost possessions on Oldacre's wagon. Everyone said it *must* have fallen into the hands of the Boers, and as I had come at my own

risk I could not claim compensation. Presently I began a letter to Tim, but I only wrote a few lines, for there was a perfect fusillade of firing going on.

“Soon after two o'clock we all made an excellent luncheon, with the laudable desire of leaving as little as possible for the Boers. The firing by this time had ceased, the Zulus had dispersed, and we knew that the Boers might arrive at any moment. Then a trooper rode down furiously with a verbal message to me. The O.C.'s compliments, and would I go up to the camp at once. All the women—of whom there were about four, and two children—with the exception of myself and Barklie's housekeeper, were already there, and delay was dangerous. I had no idea of parting with the miserable remnant of luggage I possessed, so I sent the trooper back with my compliments to the O.C., and would he be so good as to send down something for my luggage. That produced a mule waggon in a very short space of time, and after seeing my belongings packed on it, I started to walk to the camp, accompanied by Miss Murray. I think we both rather wished the Boers would appear before we got there.

“At the entrance to the camp I was met by two men I knew, and they were as nice as they could be. They took me to their mess to have tea, while one of their servants put my things into a tent that was being prepared for me. They were most apologetic about asking me to let Miss Murray share my tent at night, but of course that could not be helped. It is only a small camp and there is not a superfluous tent or bed, or anything else. Both officers and men have given up the things that we have for use. One unlucky man who came late from patrol duty that evening was unaware of the invasion that had taken place, and made his way to the mess hut, for a much-needed



whisky and soda. He retired hastily and much discomfited at the vision of a lady and child in possession! The men from Nqutu had to sleep in or under the waggons that had brought up such of their property as they had had time to save. Luckily a great number of blankets and pillows had been brought from Barklie's, so that we had plenty, and as I had only a stretcher bed and Miss Murray none at all, we were most thankful for them.

"After a prolonged and lively tea at the improvised mess house, I went to put my tent a little in order and then went to see the Englishwoman, who had been put into the mess hut proper. Poor thing, I was so sorry for her. The hut is simply four sheets of corrugated iron, which with another sheet for a roof, makes a very small room. There is no window, so you have to sit with the rudely constructed door propped open, or else have a candle inside. Certainly there is plenty of air, as there are draughts everywhere. The mother was sitting on a box when I went in, trying to soothe a yelling baby. Soon after I got back to my tent, from which Miss Murray had departed to stay with the hotel people till bed-time, one of my friends came to fetch me to dinner. Such a merry dinner we had, the fun fast and furious. I was the only woman present, and one of the officers proposed my health in a most flattering speech, and then they drank to Botha for giving them the pleasure of my society! Then they sang 'For *she's* a jolly good fellow,' and I asked one of the men to reply for me. As he, however, only made another flattering speech, I was obliged to thank them all myself.

"The orderly who is told off to look after me is a Reserve man and such a good servant. He brings my breakfast every morning to my tent—it is two days since I began this letter—as I have declined the early mess

breakfast. The man even manages to get hot water for me, and fills the invaluable hot-water bottle. An attack was confidently expected during Sunday night, or at dawn on Monday. As the Boers were estimated at between one and two thousand, our little force of 330 or so was not large, but then the fort has two guns and we did not think that the Boers had any except the two spiked ones they had taken from Gough's force." [The Boers had guns, but this was not known at the time.] "All of us women were asked to sleep in our clothes, so that we might be ready to be hurried into the trenches at any moment. I did not close my eyes all night. For one thing, the sounds of camp life close to my tent prevented me from sleeping. For a long time the signallers were trying to get into communication with the Doornkop and other stations, and the flash-light apparatus was close to me. Then I was intensely excited, and while positively yearning to be in a real attack, I was worried about your grief in case anything happened to me.

"The night, however, passed quietly, and soon after 6 a.m. Mr. Barklie came to the tent to ask Miss Murray to go down to the hotel with him. The Boers had passed to one side of Nqutu and were then about twenty miles from the camp. At breakfast time, the orderly hurried in, exclaiming: 'Ma'am, we are saved. The Scots Greys are at Vant's Drift on their way to relieve us, and a column of our troops is at Help-makaar.' So we were all allowed to return to the town during the day, but no luggage was to be moved and we were all to come back to the camp at night. One piece of news was specially cheering for me. Oldacre's waggon had come in safely, having escaped the Boers almost by a miracle. It was stuck in a spruit when the boys saw the Boers about half a mile away, but luckily the enemy were too much

engaged in smashing up the Zulu Impi to notice them or the waggon. They came straight up to the camp, so I have the satisfaction of knowing that my belongings are in safety.

"I remained at the camp till nearly lunch time writing a letter to Tim, and then taking a little walk round the place with the O.C. I was asked most kindly to stay at the camp for meals, but I think this would be a shame as I know they are short of food. The convoy expected from Dundee has been postponed indefinitely on account of all this upset, and the poor men go on half rations from to-day. So I went down to Barklie's for luncheon then back to finish my letter and went to the mess to tea. I had asked the O.C. if I might go out to see the place where the Boers and Zulus had been engaged the previous day, but he would not hear of it as he thought some Boers were very likely hiding near. I did not much mind, as, though we heard later that the Zulu loss was only four, we thought that they had forty killed, and forty dead Zulus I did not care to see. What I did want to do was to pick up some of the cartridges, as I had actually heard the whole affair. I was told at the time that a native woman had heard the Boers say that morning that they would have attacked us the previous night had they known we were so weak. Now they *did* know, they were coming back that night. As one of the officers said, however, the threat might have been made on purpose for the woman to hear and report.

"After tea I went back to Barklie's to get my letters and bundle of papers, for the post-cart is running again and had got in safely. Strolling back late to the camp, I was startled by the sudden roar of a sentry out of the darkness: 'Halt! Who goes there?' I stopped dead, and replied 'Friend.' Then came the usual 'Pass friend.

All's well,' and I made a vow to be ready for the challenge another time. The next day we were told we could spend the night in Nqutu, as a squadron of Scots Greys had come and were encamped a little way off. I have had an anxious wire from Tim, who does not like my being here at all. I have told him the danger is past as they do not think the Boers will risk any attack on Nqutu, while there is a large force close by. Well, it has been a most stirring time, but I long to be clean again."

The next letter came from the Royal Hotel, Dundee.

"When my last letter went everything seemed to have settled down quietly. For a couple of days I enjoyed myself immensely, for the weather was delightful, the wattle trees were all in a golden glory, and the scent-laden air was delicious. I had collected all my things again and occupied myself with unpacking and making my room nice, and taking long walks daily. When I took out my habit that I had never expected to see again, I thought joyfully 'Plenty of riding now.' Then on Thursday morning guns were going again, and word came in that Major Chapman was being engaged heavily at Itala. As this place is twenty miles or more from Nqutu, I went for a long walk as usual that day, in the direction that the engagement had been on Sunday last. I meant to have some of those cartridges. I had been directed to a group of trees on a hill about six miles off, but after walking from four-and-a-half to five miles, the trees still seemed so far that I turned back, as I was afraid of being belated. I had, too, been implored so earnestly not to run any risk of being captured by stray parties of Boers, that I felt bound to be careful. The next day the weather was again perfect, and after putting the finishing touches to my room, and driving some nails into the walls to hang up some of my photographs, etc., on, I had a long walk to



a waterfall, that I knew well as I had ridden out to it during my former visit to Rorke's Drift. I might have known something was going to happen, for I felt such passionate *joie de vivre* simply from the feeling of perfect health and enjoyment of the beautiful scenery.

"At luncheon I heard that Major Chapman's fight the previous day had been a very serious affair, and the casualties heavy. Every mounted man in the Nqutu camp—only a few squadrons of the Volunteer Composite Regiment—was starting at once to join Major Chapman's force. I watched them start, taking the only ambulance waggon with them. A convoy from Dundee, escorted by some of the 6th Dragoons, was expected in that night to take the place of the V. C. R.'s. In the course of the afternoon two subalterns of the King's Own came to see me, and we made all sorts of plans for rides and teas as soon as all the fuss was over about sending off the reinforcements to Itala, for they assured me things were bound to settle down in a few days. But in an hour or two all our plans were knocked on the head. I had just dressed for dinner and arranged some beautiful roses that had been sent me when Barklie came to my door. He held a paper in his hand that he gave me, saying as he did so: 'I fear I have bad news for you, Mrs. Steer.' I found that it was an order for every woman to leave Nqutu and go down to Dundee by a convoy then expected in every minute. The convoy was to start on its return journey at 6 o'clock the following morning. The names of the six women and of each child in Nqutu were on the paper, and everyone had to put her initials against her name.

"It was not till the next day that I learned the reason of this sudden order. It seemed that in addition to the commando under Botha and other leaders that had sheered away from us to attack Itala, and that were not

at all too far off to return in a single night to Nqutu, De Wet, with 12,000 men, was at Nondweni not many miles away. This was the last straw, and it was immediately decided to clear every woman out of the place. I was completely overwhelmed when I heard of the order, but obviously the first thing was to have dinner, as it was just ready. Directly it was over I went to consult the magistrate and communicate by telephone with the camp. I found that the convoy had come in and that it was an absolute necessity that I should go, the danger being too pressing for me to be allowed to remain, even at my own risk, as I wished to do.

“Was it not maddening? While I was talking over the telephone to the O.C. at the camp I heard that the trunk I had left at Dundee to come out by the first convoy had actually arrived by the very one with which I now had to return. It seemed to add insult to injury for that trunk to arrive and go back by the same waggon! It was nearly 10 o'clock when I got back to Barklie's, and I packed hard till 3.30 and then lay down for an hour, too tired and excited to sleep. It was rather a curious consolation to know that the Boers might arrive during the night and thus settle matters. However, they did not turn up, and at 4.30 I got up, finished off my packing, and before six set off with at least twelve boys carrying my baggage. I marched with my retinue to Strachan's store, that being on the direct road from the camp. There I had some most acceptable coffee and something to eat, for nothing had been ready when I left Barklie's.

“All the women, except Barklie's housekeeper and myself, went off by the post-cart at 6.30, but the convoy did not start till nearly seven. Now, you will never guess how I returned to Dundee. At least, *you* might, but to the people here my method was much more surprising

than if I had gone by balloon, or on an elephant! I walked every foot of the thirty-six miles, except when crossing the Buffalo and one of the deeper spruits, where I got into the waggon. The walk was quite unpremeditated. I was watching the luggage being put on the waggon when it struck me what a glorious morning it was for a walk, and how disinclined I felt to lumber along in an ox waggon. I told the conductor, therefore, that I would go on and should probably walk the first trek. Off I started and I did enjoy it, in spite of being very downhearted at leaving. There were minor worries too, for I was most uncertain about getting taken in at Dundee, as rumours had come in that the place was crowded. I had begged one of those who had gone in the post-cart to secure a room if possible for me at the Royal, but whether she would succeed in doing so was doubtful. Then the smell from the dead horses, mules, and oxen that lined the road was almost too much for me, but in spite of everything I preferred to walk to being in the waggon. I revelled in the scenery and there was always the excitement that I might be held up by the Boers at any moment. The conductor of the convoy implored me not to go far ahead of the waggons, but as I said to him what did it matter? The convoy was entirely unprotected, for not a man of the escort that had brought it out could be spared from the defence of the Nqutu camp, so that in any case we were at the mercy of the Boers if they appeared. It was hoped that the string of empty waggons—for of course our personal luggage distributed over a dozen huge buck waggons looked absolutely nothing—the oxen of which were obviously tired out, might not prove attractive to any bands of marauding Boers that might be about.

“The first trek was to Vant’s Drift, about twelve miles from Nqutu, where the Buffalo divides Natal from Zulu-

land. You cannot imagine the state the place was in when we arrived. One of our columns had just come in, and General Hamilton's column had gone through a few hours previously. To put it mildly the place was very untidy! I fared well and was much touched by the kindness of the people who keep the little hotel at the Drift. They said they had known me when I was at Rorke's Drift on my first visit to Zululand, and they would not take a farthing for the meal they gave me. I do not know whether to call this meal breakfast or luncheon, but it was most welcome and consisted of eggs, bread and butter, and tea. I also had the use of a bedroom and managed to get an hour's rest. The kind people even gave me a packet of bread and meat to take away with me when I started off with the convoy about 4 p.m. I got into the waggon to cross the river and then walked on ahead. When I reached the top of the hill I turned to take a last sad look at the pretty blue Buffalo and then walked on till dusk. I had seen nothing of the convoy for so long that I was a little uneasy, so I sat down on an ant heap and waited. At last, when it was getting quite dark, the conductor came up on foot and the waggons were creeping along after him. The oxen had broken down on the way and one poor brute had been left to die in the road where it fell, for they had nothing to shoot it with. Thank God I was not there to see it. Oh, how many times the tears have poured down my face for the awful sufferings of the animals during this war. And I can do nothing to help them, nor can anyone else. The conductor had hoped to get further that night, but owing to the state of the oxen he out-spanned at the first stream we came to after they overtook me.

“ We had picked up six or seven West Kent Tommies wandering about, with apparently little idea of how they



came where we found them. They were only too thankful to be picked up by the waggons and taken *somewhere*. It was a picturesque sight when all the waggons were out-spanned and laagered up, with a full moon shining overhead. Suddenly a squadron of soldiers in khaki rode up. I never doubted their being our own men, and as I was engaged in concocting a whisky and sparklet and eating my bread and meat, I took no further notice of them than to think what a striking picture they made. The conductor told me afterwards, though, that he had a very bad ten minutes. The men came up talking Dutch and asked him in Dutch where he had come from, where he was going, and where Hamilton's column was. To all these questions the conductor answered discreetly and then asked who his questioners were. They replied that they were scouts on the English side. It is possible, of course, that this was true, as I believe we are allowing Dutchmen and all sorts of odds and ends to serve with us, but the conductor was very doubtful about them and watched them anxiously while they examined the waggons and oxen. They could not have taken the former as the poor animals could not move another step without rest, still they might have shot them and burned the waggons and then our plight would not have been pleasant.

“ My preparations for the night were of the simplest. I took off my hat and lay down on a mattress, but, alas, not to sleep; and in the morning at four, when the waggons started, I replaced my hat and was ready to set out. I walked on in the semi-darkness, for the moon had gone down and the sun was not yet above the horizon. At the first spruit, while I was choosing a crossing place, the foremost waggon came up, so I got into it and went over without wetting my feet. It was Sunday morning, and at about 8 o'clock I stopped at a shallow river where

I thought they would be likely to out-span, and took up my position on a rock in mid-stream. When the waggons came up the conductor decided to out-span on the far side, so I had my dressing bag dropped beside me as the waggon passed and proceeded to make a fragmentary toilet. How you would have laughed had you seen me. I was, of course, in full view of all the party, and the West Kent men were having a wash at a respectful distance from me. It was all too funny for words, and some biscuits and a whisky and soda were all that were possible for breakfast! After this I trekked right on to Dundee, which I reached soon after midday, and some time in front of the waggons. Never have I enjoyed a bath and bed more!"

It was fortunate for Maggie that a room had been secured for her, for the place was full indeed. General Lyttelton had come in from Newcastle, and the members of his staff were filling up the hotels. The Englishwoman from Nqutu who had found a room for my sister, had many Dutch relatives and friends, and some of the latter told her that the Boers had allowed Mr. Winston Churchill to make his escape from Pretoria, as the latter's views were so well known that they believed he would do them more service free, than if they kept him a prisoner. This story she told my sister, and I give it for what it is worth.

Soon after Maggie's arrival at Dundee, in the autumn of 1901, General Allonby's column passed through on its way from Vryheid to Newcastle to refit. "Not before they needed it, poor dears," my sister wrote, "for they have been fighting for months and are dirty, ragged, and unkempt. The horses and mules are in poor condition, and some of them seem nothing but skin and bone. The waggons are battered and ramshackle beyond description,

the worst of all being the ambulance, in which I saw there were three or four poor men. Of dogs there were many, and one consequential-looking animal came in sitting on a gun-carriage and apparently guarding the gun. Though the men were so war-worn and grimy, they were many of them laughing and joking, the familiar English Tommy laugh and joke, so that if you shut your eyes you could imagine yourself to be in Plymouth.

“A sad story Captain Woods told me on the day after my arrival. That poor, bright boy, Mr. Kane, was killed at Itala. The last time I saw him he was one of a merry dinner-party, and I did not know that he had gone with Major Chapman to Itala. Mr. Kane belonged to the South Lancashire Regiment, but was attached to the Mounted Infantry.

“On Wednesday I saw my friends, the Nqutu guns, for the last time. I was crossing the road before a long procession of mounted soldiers, two gun-carriages, ammunition carts, etc., when someone called out ‘How are you, Mrs. Steer?’ It was a subaltern who was bringing in his guns from Nqutu, *en route* for India. The Battery—the 67th—was to have gone back to India a month ago, but owing to the Boer invasion of Natal, they have stayed on. An hour or two later I watched them off to the station, with the drum and fife band of the South Lancashires playing them there.

“I had rather a merry tea-party the other day, as we were trying to arrange a most sporting wager. It began by — chaffing me about my walk from Nqutu, and he offered to do the journey in a rickshaw against my doing it on foot. I was to walk every inch of the way, except when crossing the Buffalo, and the subaltern was to be drawn by the same boy all the way, and not to get out, however steep the hill might be. I need hardly say that

the betting was heavily on me, for no rickshaw boy could possibly do it, though the sub. is remarkably small and light, and I had shown that I could walk it. Indeed, while the stakes of £25 a side were being arranged, one of the men remarked, 'And who is to pay for the rickshaw boy's funeral at the end?' It was all very silly, and the affair dropped, owing to the sub. having to take out a company of mounted infantry to Nqutu, and we all feared that his colonel might object to his going at the head of his men in a rickshaw! I also pointed out that the O.C. might refuse me a pass when the object of my return was explained."

In a short time my sister was told that it was safe for her to return to Nqutu if she wished, but she decided against it. As the war was lasting so long, and her husband was far away in pursuit of De Wet, she thought of getting a passage home on a trooper, and in October, about a month after her visit to Nqutu, she went down as far as Colenso. At this place General Dartnell and his column were by good luck encamped when she arrived. The General was on his way from Zululand to Harrismith, and had halted at Colenso to meet Lord Milner, who was visiting the battlefields. On the day following her arrival his column marched on, but at Edward's Hotel, where she was staying, she found other friends.

While at Colenso my sister visited such of the battlefields as were within a possible distance. Of her visit to the Hlwangui Hill, she says: "Such a perfect day, and not a soul but myself, not even a native was either on the mountain or near it. The view from the top was so intensely peaceful, with the great river winding along at its foot, and the mountains and hills rising in all directions around. The only sign of what had been were the trenches, of which there were two or three on the top of the



hill, and one running part of the way up. Then in the plain below and on the distant hills there were white spots gleaming here and there, and I knew that they were the monuments to our dead."

Towards the end of November, 1901, my sister went to Maritzburg, but her plan of returning home was stopped by her husband sending her a wire that he hoped to get leave. As soon as he joined her they went on to Illovo, a charming little place on the south coast, and as General Dartnell and other friends were staying there, the visit was a very pleasant one.

As it had been during the time of the fiercest fighting, tragedy and comedy were strangely blended. My sister writes: "Did I tell you of a story I heard when I was in Maritzburg? It came from a man who had been on leave at Cape Town. He was walking up Adderley Street, and immediately in front of him were two Tommies, while a little ahead of the latter were an Englishman and a lady. 'Look, Bill,' said one Tommy to the other, 'that chap in front is a lord.' The other pondered, scratched his head, and answered slowly, 'Is he now? And is that there her ladyship?' 'No,' came the answer; after another pause, 'No, she's just what you might call an emergency ration.' The friend who told me this added: 'Yesterday a lot of people dropped in to tea, everyone of whom, as it happened, knew the story. Rather late a man came in, full of his visits to the battlefields round Ladysmith, from which place he had just returned. He told us how completely sightseers had cleared off all trophies, and finished up with: "I hunted all over Spion Kop, and only found an emergency ration!" There was a shout of laughter, but no one explained the reason, and apparently for the rest of his call Major —— was wondering what he could have said that was so remarkably witty.'"

The holiday at Illovo came to an abrupt end, as before his leave was up my brother-in-law was ordered to Durban to take the place of the recruiting officer, who was ill. Here, too, life was diversified by lively incidents. "On Sunday," Maggie wrote, "Tim and I went to the Bluff, and on our way back we had quite an exciting time. A lot of recruits, mostly drunk, could not be stopped from overcrowding our little steam ferry, and they very nearly sank her. It was as much as the man and boy in charge of the boat, aided by Tim and one or two of the other passengers, could do to check the rush, cut the rope, and push off before the wretches had swamped us. Then those who were on board were with difficulty prevented from indulging in a free fight and overturning the crazy little launch in their struggles. The last I saw of two of the worst of the party was that on landing a ring had been formed, and they were starting to fight it out."

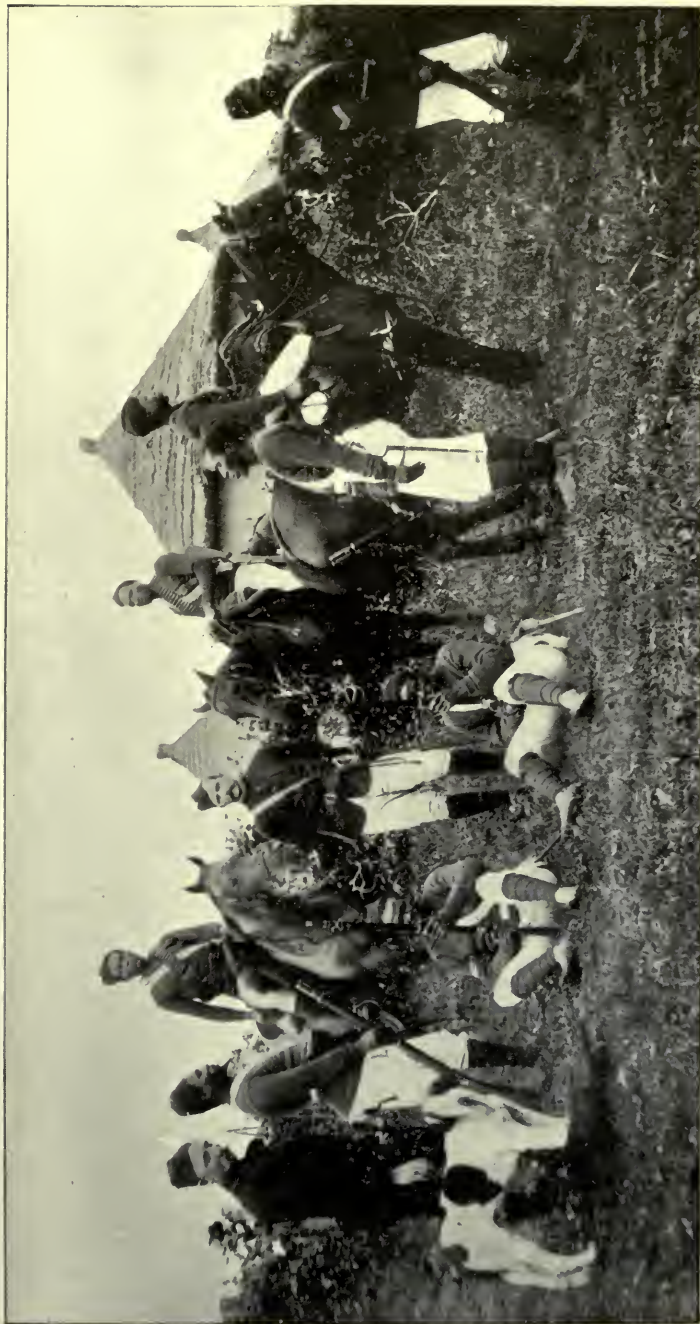
The shadow of the war was still with them in the tragic story of a fellow-guest at the hotel. A young Englishman, a subaltern in one of the irregular corps, soon attracted my sister's notice by the care and affection he lavished on a fox-terrier that was his constant companion. "The dog is always with him," she wrote, "and at every meal the sub. is so careful about feeding him. Such a nice plateful the little creature has, for his master never forgets him, and as they are at the next table to ours, I always watch the little performance. Tim and I had no idea that the young fellow was down on sick leave, or that there was anything wrong with him, till about a week ago, when Tim was told that the poor boy had been terribly wounded, having had a bullet through his thigh and another through the lungs. The latter is fatal, and the doctors told him when he came here that he might live about two months, but that, humanly speaking, the end

must come then. Already one of the months has passed, and it does seem so dreadful to watch the boy, who does not look the least like an invalid, and often comes into luncheon laughing and talking and looking such a bright, clean young sub. I could not help hoping that the friend who told Tim about him had exaggerated, but alas, it is not so. There is no hope for him, and he wants to have a good time and enjoy himself while he can, but means to go back to the hospital at the last. Then there is the dog! I can hardly keep the tears back when I look at the pair."

For some time Tim acted as recruiting officer at Durban, for though he was anxious to return to active service, it was not thought advisable to move him, as peace negotiations were already in the air. When, at last, peace was proclaimed, Tim learned the news in rather a strange way. He happened to be on the water, near Congella, fishing, when he heard tremendous cheering from the Boers at the Merebank concentration camp. The wildness of their cheers, as the proclamation was read out to them, left him in no doubt as to what had occurred. Almost immediately after this orders came for all the recruiting officers to rejoin, and Tim went off to Klerksdorp, where Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry were at the time. Once more my sister determined to go home, and from Maritzburg she applied for an indulgence passage. By the time, however, she obtained it, things had again changed, and Tim was given a commission in the Natal Border Police. This regiment, raised by Colonel Mansel, was to protect the Vryheid-Utrecht districts, that after the Second Boer War had been given to Natal, a well-deserved reward for the loyalty she had shown during the war.

While Colonel Mansel was making a camp at Dundee, to get his men and horses into shape before going on to





COLONEL MANSEL, C.M.G., AND NONGAI.





Vryheid, my sister, giving up her passage home, joined her husband at Dundee, and stayed with him there until they both went on with the Natal Border Police to Vryheid. Soon after this my brother-in-law received the news that he had been given the D.S.O. It was arranged that I should join them at Vryheid, taking out with me their little son and his nurse, and we were given passages on the transport *Plassy* that left Southampton early in December, 1902. In the end, however, my nephew did not go out, but remained with his father's relatives in England, and I arrived at Vryheid about the middle of January, 1903.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE AFTERMATH

IT was six months after the war had ended that I started by the transport *Plassy* on my return to South Africa. My companion was an Irish terrier named Jerry, who belonged to my sister and had been in my care during my stay in England. Maggie and her husband were at Vryheid, then the headquarters of the Natal Border Police, and after landing at Durban I went up by train to De Jagers Drift, the last place to which the Vryheid line was open.

When I reached De Jagers, soon after midday, I was taken off to the quaintest little mess-house possible, for I could get no further that day. The so-called mess-house was a hut made of corrugated iron, and though it boasted both a door and a window, the latter was unglazed, and could only be covered roughly with a sheet of iron even in the worst weather. This palatial abode was the headquarters of a Natal Border Police officer, whose duty it was to send up supplies to the regiment from the rail-head by waggon. The supplies were still most difficult to get, and for some time after I reached Vryheid our food supply was scanty and most uncertain in its arrival.

At the hut I was entertained most hospitably, and my host soon had luncheon ready. Then an Imperial officer, who was on his way to Vryheid, came in, and soon after two N. B. P. officers arrived from headquarters, so that our party was a large one for such a tiny place. I fear that I enjoyed the lion's share of the luncheon, for I had an

unfair advantage of the late comers, as the meal was well under weigh by the time they put in an appearance. The mule waggon that had brought the officers down from Vryheid was to take me back the next day, and it waited at the mess-house till I was ready to go on for the night to the hotel that lay on the other side of the Buffalo.

Before morning a thunderstorm broke over the place, and flooded the mess-hut, so that the men who were passing the night there were driven to take shelter in a deserted and tumbledown block-house near. Early the next morning we started, only just managing to get through the Buffalo, which was in flood, and arrived at Vryheid about 2 o'clock. It was three years since Jerry had seen his mistress, but when we drew up at the house, he jumped down from the waggon, ran up through the garden, and giving my sister a delighted welcome, lay down by her side on the veranda and was at home in a minute. He behaved, in fact, as if we had just come in from a walk, and accepted everything as if it was a matter of everyday occurrence. Dogs, I find, take any upheaval in their life in just as many different ways as people do, and a journey of seven thousand miles was, to Jerry, all in the month's work.

Vryheid is a thoroughly Dutch town, modern and small, and lies on high ground just under the South Lancashire Hill, as we used to call it, because it was held for so long by the South Lancashire Regiment during the war. The Zulu name for it is the Zunguin Mountain, and what it will be known as next, who can say? Probably a Dutch name will be given it, to judge by the way things are going now. The hill is a great feature of the view from Vryheid. Dense bush clothes its foot, and higher up steep krantzes fall sheer in many places for several hundred feet, while on the top masses of spiky aloes and scarlet blossoms are



scattered about the walls of rock. Before the war there was only a rough track up the hill, but the South Lancashires, with much labour, made an excellent road that winds up from the little town.

Vryheid itself is built round an open square, of which the large Dutch church occupies the centre. It was in this church that Lucas Meyer's body lay, covered with magnificent wreaths sent by European admirers, before it was taken out to the little wild graveyard on the hill. The scene in that graveyard was one of the many incongruities that we meet with so constantly in South Africa—expensive, wonderfully-made artificial flowers, of the best European manufacture, stiff and prim under their hideous glass shades, and all around the wide open veld, with the great ranges of iron-bound mountains piercing the fathomless blue of the South African sky.

In Vryheid there were not many Boers about usually, as they do not affect towns. The stores that are built round the central square are mostly owned by enterprising English and English-speaking Jews, these people being tempted up by the prospect of trade through the development of the mineral wealth of the neighbourhood. There were also one or two old-established Dutch stores, and in the houses facing the square there lived well-to-do Dutch, whose ideas had taken a modern and fashionable turn. These, however, were not numerous, and it was as a centre for the many, many miles of wild veld that stretched out on all sides, that Vryheid itself existed. The Court House, with its great Union Jack floating over it, was noticeable among the other buildings, and it was here that the disputes of the scattered dwellers in the veld were brought in for settlement.

During the war there was constant fighting going on about Vryheid, and after the Boers found it no longer

possible to hold the town and our own troops took possession of it, the enemy got very close up more than once. The Boers, however, did not forget that the buildings belonged to their own people, and they did very little damage with their guns. I do not remember seeing any shell marks in the place.

It was a curious state of things when I arrived. Almost everyone we employed had been out on commando against us only a few months before. Our little house had belonged to Dutch people, whose son had been killed at Halkrantz, twenty-eight miles away, just before the end of the war. When my sister went up, things were only just being straightened out, and the people coming back to their homes from commando and the concentration camps. Workmen were busy at our little bungalow, adding to the accommodation before my arrival, as the place was too small for us. Among other improvements, a rondavel was built out at the back, and the contractor for this amused Maggie greatly by his account of his experiences while the fighting was still going on. He had been on commando early in the war, but surrendering to the English he had been allowed to go back to his home at Vryheid. Soon after his return he contracted to put up our block-houses in the neighbourhood! Very well he built them too, quite honestly carrying out the work for his enemies, and pocketing the handsome profit fairly earned. This Boer got what good he could for himself out of the troubles of his country, and, from his point of view, why not? Someone would build the English block-houses, so a Boer might as well profit by the business as not.

We always got on very well with the surrounding Boers, though their way of looking at things was often a little surprising to us. On their side, I fancy that many of

them regarded us as well-meaning, but a little mad. Our affection for games was clearly incomprehensible to them. When they passed a garden where grown-up people were indulging in "twos and threes," "bumps," or some other infantine amusement, they would look on with a stolid, indulgent stare, that usually ended in a pitying smile. Some of the Dutch girls were quite ready to enter into any of the pastimes when they had a chance of doing so, and one or two even rode in the paper-chases, but the younger men kept aloof, and the older people of both sexes only gave their slow smiles to the wild doings of the English.

In our friendly relations with the Dutch the late war was never mentioned, unless they started the subject themselves; but it was often a little difficult to steer clear of it, as the after-effects of the long struggle were all round us. A bone factory was in full swing at Vryheid, the material being supplied by the countless skeletons of animals that were gathered in from the surrounding country. Every farmhouse round had been burned down, and we were once invited to visit a Dutch leader's family, with whom we were on excellent terms, in their temporary "waggon house." We found, however, that the waggon house was quite as large as most ordinary dwelling-houses. It had several rooms, and the upper part was most comfortable. The owners were waiting quite contentedly to see how much compensation money they would get before they started on the business of rebuilding.

We had rather an embarrassing experience one night when some Dutch as well as English friends were dining with us. All the flower vases on our table were Maggie's pom-pom shells, our doors were kept open by large shells, and our central dinner ornament was Tim's one and only

piece of loot, a plated cup. As the cup was of no intrinsic value, it had never been claimed, and when filled with masses of roses it made a lovely centrepiece. On it there was a Dutch inscription, and in spite of our efforts to damp his curiosity, an inquisitive subaltern would insist on asking the meaning of it. As everyone's attention was drawn to the cup by his questions, its story had to be given, and we were thankful that the incident that had thrown it into Tim's hands redounded to the credit of the Dutch vrows' pluck and sporting instincts.

During one of the many chases after the nimble *de Wet*, our troops were warned that the Boer leader had been ill, and was probably travelling in a Cape cart. So our men were remarkably keen on Cape carts, and allowed none to escape them unsearched. One day some of Thorneycroft's Horse pursued a small body of Boers, who had a cart with them. After some time the Boers separated, and Tim with a handful of men followed the cart, while the rest went after the mounted men. Tim and his troopers tore over the open, stony veld, full of hope that to them would fall the glory of capturing the elusive Boer leader. They were rapidly overhauling the cart, when it stopped dead, and out jumped two women. As Tim shouted, "Stop firing, they are women," the spirited ladies cut the traces and freed their horses (you can get horses out of the complicated-looking harness of a Cape cart more quickly than from any other vehicle I know) sprang on their backs and galloped off. They were pursued, of course, but the start was too good, and they were soon beyond all fear of capture. The disappointed troopers came back and Tim examined the cart. In it, however, there was nothing of any importance, only a few private papers and the cup which he took possession of and brought down to Maggie as a souvenir



of the sporting Dutch women, who preferred their wild, bare-backed ride to capture.

The district of which Vryheid was the chief town had long been a subject of dispute between the Zulus, the original owners, and the Dutch. To the latter it had been given over as the price of the help given by the Dutch to Cetewayo and the Usutu tribe in their struggle with Sibepu. It was first called the New Republic and later incorporated in the Transvaal, and when I was there it had, on the conclusion of the war, been handed over to Natal. For the protection of the white inhabitants, the Natal Border Police was raised, as I have said already. Some of the officers of this force and most of the men were drawn from the various disbanded irregular regiments, the rest of the officers came from the Natal Police, and a splendid body of men they were. Enured to the climate and used to active service, I do not think that a finer regiment could be found after a few months' discipline had got the men into shape. When I reached Vryheid, Colonel Fairlie (Inspector, Natal Police), had just taken over command from Colonel Mansel, who was recalled to headquarters of the Natal Police. It was the greatest pity that the Border Police was disbanded only a year after it had been raised, for, if the Natal Government had had such a force ready to take the field at a moment's notice, I do not think the native rising in 1906 would ever have taken place.

The Police were most popular with the Dutch in the Vryheid district, and the latter often came to them to settle their difficulties with the natives. One day an officer on outpost duty received an appeal to adjust a dispute of this kind. He consequently sent his sergeant, a stolid, British non.-com. to put matters straight, as duty prevented him from going himself. Orders having been

given that every possible effort should be used to avoid friction, he warned the sergeant to be careful, ending emphatically, "Now mind, you must use diplomacy." "Yes, sir," came the ready answer, and the man set off on his mission. Presently he returned to report. "Well Sergeant, what happened?" was the inquiry. "Oh, sir, it's all right. The native was explaining, when the Dutchman began talking, so I just gave him a shove down into his chair and said, 'You shut up, and remember that you are one of a conquered nation.'" The man smiled triumphantly, confident that his mission had been carried through with success, but his horrified superior rushed off to see if it was still possible to pour oil on the troubled waters. He found the old Dutchman still gasping in his chair from the effect of the shock. The insult of a native being considered before him had made him feel as though the sky had fallen. Indeed, he was so overwhelmed that the officer was able to put matters right more easily than if wrath instead of astonishment had been uppermost in the poor man's mind. Probably he was already convinced of the sergeant's insanity, and was willing to listen to any explanation that restored him to self-respect. The officer always declared that it was his unlucky use of the word diplomacy that had caused the mischief. The sergeant did not understand it, and had interpreted it according to his own ideas.

One young officer had apparently been very diplomatic in his dealings with the Dutch. He told us modestly how very kind a Dutch woman at a farm near his outpost had been. She had supplied him with butter and eggs and had steadily refused to accept payment for them. "Yes," remarked a brother officer, who heard him tell the story, "but she charged me double, when I succeeded you, so she did not suffer by her kindness!"

One troop of the Border Police was formed of Dutch, under a Dutch officer. This officer was very ill when I reached Vryheid, and not long after he died. His funeral was another instance of the strange incongruities of the life in South Africa. One of the English officers who attended the funeral told me how, when they were all assembled in the Dutch Church, this had struck him. The Dutchman who had fought against England, was lying under the English flag, in his own Church. His own burial service was read over him, while his coffin was surrounded by soldiers in English uniform. His death march all through the long mile uphill to the graveyard, that was shared by Boer and Briton, was the wailing Dead March in Saul, played by the bagpipes of the Scottish Squadron of the N. B. P. Even his last requiem was the rolling thunder of a land that belonged in the first instance neither to Boer nor Briton, but to the Zulu.

Northern Natal is a dry, barren and mountainous district, and though I like the desolate looking country, I can understand that to many it is but "sun and dust." I was once told that an American declared after a visit to this and the neighbouring districts, that "God Almighty must have put some good under the earth, as He had made the outside so hideous." To me, however, the great ranges of barren, sun-dried mountains, appeal strongly, and I love the wild open country. I cannot say the same of the storms that rage here with great severity. It is sad to see on so many of the graves of our soldiers, the words "killed by lightning," and none of our troops suffered more from this cause than the South Lancashires. The hill they occupied had to be held through storm and sunshine, and the ironstone drew down death from the sky. In my frequent rides to the little graveyard, where

so many of our men lie buried, I never failed to visit two stones that stand side by side, and are erected to the memory of two young officers. On one of the stones is the inscription "God be merciful to me a sinner," and on the other, "They who die for England rest in the Lord." How often I have thought over the different views of present and future that they give.

All the time I was at Vryheid, the remains of our fortifications on the hill remained, even the sandbags were lying about within the lines, and a few lonely graves, marked by iron crosses, showed where men had been buried where they fell. The Boers once got right up to the cliff overlooking the town, and there was a legend that the body of one of them was still lying among the impenetrable thorns at the bottom of a krantz. Search parties were always being suggested to discover the truth of the story, but we never got beyond the suggestion.

Beside the constant fighting that took place during the second Boer War, Northern Natal has been a scene of warfare from the earliest times. At Vryheid we were surrounded by battlefields. To the west is the Blood River, by whose waters Dingaan was crushed by the Boers. The Ubombo Mountain was where that fine old Zulu warrior Sibepu was finally defeated by the Usutu faction, aided by the Boers. About forty miles distant is the Intombi River, where part of the 80th—2nd Battalion South Staffordshire—Regiment was cut up, and only fifteen miles to the north-west lies Hlobane, the scene of one of our conflicts during the Zulu War.

My sister and myself were one day driven out to visit Hlobane. As this was before the Hlobane colliery days and the railway had not been begun, we made inquiries before starting as to the reception we were likely to meet with from the only farmer then living near the mountain.



We were assured that the Dutchman would not mind our visit, provided no one was in uniform, and as a pair of regulation boots was the only sign of such a thing in our party, we were glad that these passed unobserved. Early one morning we started in a light cart with a pair of horses. The friend who was driving us not having his own harness horses in the town, borrowed a pair, one being a good steady horse and the other a very lively mare named Barmaid. The latter having proved herself too much for her then owner, had not been in harness for some time. Her chief fad was a dislike to feeling her bit, and unless she was driven with the lightest possible hands she would come to a stop and refuse to move. Happily our driver had the requisite hands to manage her and knew of her peculiarity, so that we arrived serenely at the farm. The farmhouse had been burned down and was not yet re-built, but we were received hospitably in the owner's waggon house. One large room served as living room and bedroom, and a little lean-to shed served as kitchen for the simple establishment. The farmhouse ruins close by, stood a picturesque relic of the sad necessities of war.

We got on so well with our big Boer host that he offered to conduct us over the mountain himself. We followed the route taken by Lt.-Colonel Buller—later General Sir Redvers Buller, G.C.B., V.C.—in the reconnaissance carried out by Colonel Wood—now Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., V.C.—on 28th March, 1879. At daylight Lt.-Colonel Buller, with the mounted riflemen and two battalions of Wood's Irregulars (natives under white officers), forced their way up the rough track on the eastern side of the hill. He had sharp fighting all the way up, and it was not till he reached the grassy plateau on the top that the Zulus, who were in

possession, retreated among the rocks and any other shelter they could find.

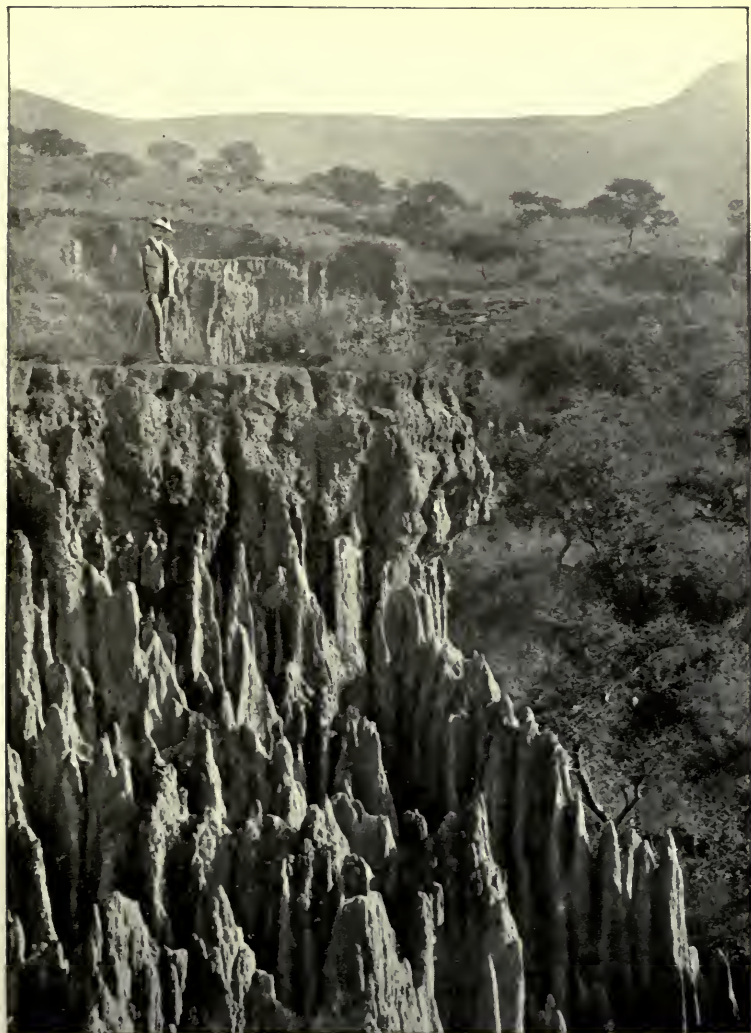
The rest of Colonel Wood's brigade followed to the slopes of the mountain. With him were some mounted Zulus, under Umtonga, Cetewayo's half-brother, whom the old chief Panda had at first intended to succeed him instead of Cetewayo. It was Umtonga who first warned Colonel Wood that an immense Zulu impi was advancing on them from the direction of Ulundi. Colonel Buller also saw the approaching enemy, and when the Zulu force hidden on the hill knew of the approach of help, they swarmed out and drove Buller's force towards their only chance of escape from the death trap in which they found themselves, the western descent. On this side there is an almost precipitous fall of one hundred and fifty feet to a narrow nek that lies a thousand feet above the surrounding country. On the far side from the hill this nek widens into a small plateau, and from here the descent is again steep and difficult.

There was a terrible struggle as our men, leading their horses, scrambled down. Many were killed on the top and many more on the narrow nek by the Zulus who were close upon them. Colonel Buller himself turned back twice to save men who were surrounded on the fatal nek, and won his Victoria Cross by doing so. Colonel Weatherby, of the Border Horse, met with his death there in an attempt to save his son, who also fell. An extraordinary feat was performed by Major Leet, who commanded the 1st Battalion of Wood's Irregulars. He was lame from a recent accident and could not walk, and he actually rode down, a thing that could only have been done by a desperate man on a horse that knew death lay behind him. Major Leet won the Victoria Cross by turning back on the plateau to give help to a dismounted officer.

Brave Piet Uys was also among the slain, and fell while making an endeavour to save one of his sons who was in difficulties with his horse. Although Uys opposed our annexation of the Transvaal openly and fairly, he fought bravely side by side with us against the Zulus and brought all his sons with him to take part in the struggle. Neither for them nor for himself would he consent to take any payment for their services. He was a great loss to Colonel Wood, as his knowledge of the country and of the enemy was invaluable. It was through Colonel Wood's efforts that later Uys's sons were well looked after.

We had a three miles' walk from the farm, and then a stiff climb up the rough track till we reached the plateau. Here we followed for a short distance the little stream where our soldiers watered their horses during the lull between their hard fight on the way up and their terrible rush down with the Zulus behind them. The Dutchman was riding and we were on foot, and as we gained the grassy plateau at the top, we were naturally discussing the struggle that had taken place there. As our host had been living near the mountain almost ever since 1879, he was of course full of local knowledge. One of our party said to him in joke: "What would you do now if history repeated itself and we were surrounded by Zulus?" He considered the matter carefully, and then said in his slow way: "Well, as I have a horse, I should have a chance. I could not save you three, or I would do so, but having only one horse, I should gallop off." He was perfectly serious and quite sensible. Only one could, in such a case, have had a chance of life, and the man with the horse was the man with the chance!

Our new friend went on to tell us that he was at Halkrantz, the place about twenty-eight miles from Vryheid where, just before the end of the second Boer War, a



HLOBANE ; NEK IN THE BACKGROUND.

*To face p. 336.*





Zulu impi, exasperated by a Boer commando having raided their cattle, fell upon the Boers and wiped out over fifty of them. Our Boer told us that he was one of the ill-fated commando, but a day or two before the fight he had left, having been warned by his native servant that "the air of that place was not healthy." We inquired if he had not warned his companions. "No," was the answer; "I did not think of it, and they would not have believed me if I had!" We enjoyed our Boer's naive ideas and evidently truthful words immensely, and he amused us by his complete unconsciousness of any other side of war than the commonsense one of never being in danger if you could help it.

No enemy appearing, he led us to the edge of the mountain, and never shall I forget the view that met us. On every side, as far as eye could see, rose mass after mass of iron-bound mountains, with mighty krantzies—walls of grey rock rising sheer into the sky. Not a single living thing was visible. The South Lancashire Hill hid Vryheid, and over the land, swept so lately by the long war, no dwelling-house raised its head. Above us, a little grey cloud was gathering rapidly into a storm, and a great brooding silence wrapped all in gloom.

We looked down the side and wondered how any horse had ever been got down that awful drop. To picture anyone riding down was, in cold blood, impossible. We gazed silently on the narrow stretch of grass that lay below us where so many of our men had fallen. A flat stone let into the ground marks the spot where Piet Uys died. He could have escaped if his son's danger had not called him back to meet a brave man's death. When at last we turned away, our guide took us among great rocks piled in grand confusion that lay on one side of the descent to the nek. Among these gigantic boulders were shallow caves

and hollows that had afforded hiding-place to the Zulus, before the advancing impi gave them courage for the swift pursuit as our men hurried from the hill-top. As we leaned over the edge of the hill the Boer pointed out the scattered bones that still lay, all those long years after the fight, unburied in the recesses of the rocks. He said that there had been many more when he first went to Hlobane, but they had been moved, and no one but himself knew of the sad relics that were left. Some of our men, unable to get down the giddy path to the nek, had taken refuge among the rocks, and there been overwhelmed by their pursuers. A little further along the edge of the hill the rocks stopped, leaving a tiny space clear, before more great boulders once more formed a framework. Down this tiny bite as it were out of the mountain side, we could look straight to the valley below, and our guide told us in his laconic way that those of our men who were not killed at once, were taken to this spot and flung over. I remember the stir of race hatred that came over me as I listened, the hatred that will for ever line the barrier between black and white, whom Nature herself has divided.

By the time we turned once more towards the farmhouse, I was getting horribly frightened at the approaching storm. The growing darkness, the thunder reverberating among a hundred mountain tops, and the flashes of lightning getting momentarily more vivid, sent me along the top and down that hill as if a whole Zulu impi was behind me. My sister declined to fly before a thunderstorm, and I fear must have regarded me with amused contempt. The storm soon swept wildly over the country, but in the snug shelter of the Boer's waggon-house, we all lunched comfortably. We had brought our supplies with us, and our host provided the etceteras, and his servant to wash up.

After luncheon, the centre of the storm having apparently passed, and only a thick mist of rain remaining, we decided to inspan and go home. It was rather a curious drive, and soon after we started the dense mist grew worse, the thunder that had never ceased rolling grew nearer and nearer, and the lightning flashes more vivid. We seemed to be moving through a thick wall that only receded just in front of us, and even the flashes of lightning only flared over us, they could not penetrate the dense greyness that shut us in. I feared the horses would be struck, and I wondered what our friend would do with us on his hands, as well as two dead horses. Then a hailstorm swept up, and I confess the situation was getting on my nerves, when we came to a sudden stop. A ridiculous little spruit that we had crossed in the morning, with the horses scarcely noticing that they were going through water at all, was now a roaring torrent across our path. Two ox waggon, with some Boers and natives were standing on the same side as ourselves, and the rain was evidently far worse up the spruit, for we looked into a black cloud splashed by lightning flashes, and the water was rising every minute. One of the Boers sent a native into the water to see how high it was, but the boy came back afraid of the strong current. My sister and I were longing to get on, but as we were not driving, we waited silently while our friend consulted with the Boers. The latter shook their heads and looked distrustfully at the rushing water, but we were most thankful when our driver quietly took up the reins and put his horses at the torrent. We got through by sheer good driving, for a wrong turn and we should, of course, all have gone down stream together. Directly we were out of the water, the cart was lightened, only myself remaining in to hold the reins. I had to keep my attention on the horses up the steep ascent, so could not look



round, but my companions told me that the Boers, emboldened by our example, were going to attempt the crossing. The leading waggon was in the water before we were out of sight, and we left the oxen swimming and heading for the right place, so hoped that they would get over without a mishap.

The scene of another fight between our men and the Zulus was Kambula Hill, that lies only eight miles from Vryheid. It was there that Colonel Wood drove back a determined attack by the Zulus, on the day following the Hlobane affair. Our camp consisted of a laager formed chiefly by the waggons of the 13th Light Infantry (Somersets), the two thousand cattle being packed into a small cattle laager, below which was a deep ravine. On some higher ground in front of the camp was a redoubt. While the main body of the Zulu impi was still three miles away, Colonel Buller, by skilful management, induced the regiments that formed the two horns of the advancing force, to make a premature attack upon the British left. They consequently charged before the main body had time to get up, and were defeated before their supports could help them. Some of the Zulu warriors were armed with Martini-Henry rifles, that they had taken from our men in the previous engagements. When the main body of the Zulu impi came up, they made a most determined charge over the open on our position. They were, however, driven back, and a counter attack by two companies of the 90th Regiment—2nd Batt. Cameronians—under Major Halkett, was completely successful. About 5.30 Colonel Buller went out with the mounted men and cleared the retreating Zulus till dark, killing a number of the very tribe that had been opposed to him on Hlobane the previous day.

From the shelter of a mealie patch near the cattle laager the Zulus did much damage during the engagement, and

we lost heavily from their fire, Major Halkett being among those shot down. The fire was at last so hot upon the cattle laager, that our men who were holding it had to be withdrawn. A private of the 90th Regiment at the time our men left was in a trench within a few yards of the laager. He and his companions opened a furious fire upon the Zulus, but to their amazement the enemy were so occupied in hunting for food that they took no notice of it. One old warrior had opened a haversack, and finding biscuits in it, was entirely occupied in gobbling them up. The 90th man had no less than twenty shots at him, and at last got so angry at his repeated misses at only fifty yards, that with some men of the 13th Regiment, he charged into the laager to get at his aggravating foe at close quarters. By the time he reached the ground, however, the wily old man, haversack, biscuits and all had vanished.

It was one of the Natal Mounted Police who was on escort duty with the Empress Eugénie on her sad visit to Zululand, who spoke of the following incident. The Empress and her party visited the scene of the battle at Kambula, and had the bad luck when going on to Hlobane, to have their convoy bogged. As their way lay over the spot where Vryheid now stands, this fact shows what the road tracks were like before the town was built. They were indeed bad enough when I knew the country. The escort managed with great difficulty to get the Empress's waggons out, and pitched her camp near the Fort Piet Uys. The men were so tired out by the time this was accomplished, that they left their own waggons standing a mile or so away, and lay down as they were on the open veld, without either food or wraps. It was a cold, frosty, moonlight night, and when the Empress came out of her tent after dinner, she saw the men lying about on the

ground, and asked why they were there. On hearing what had happened, she was so distressed, that she not only had them all brought into her sitting-room tent, where they were supplied with food, but caused every spare blanket, as well as every shawl and article of dress that could be used for the purpose, to be distributed among them as wraps. No wonder that the Empress's tent never wanted for tent pegs during the rest of her tour, though they ran so short before it came to an end that even Colonel Wood's tent was pitched with only one peg for every two ropes.

We found a great deal of difference between the servants we had had in Maritzburg, and those at Vryheid. In the former place boys who had been trained in housework could be hired, but at Vryheid we had the raw material to work on. As long as my brother-in-law's orderly acted as cook, and our native boys worked under him, things went fairly well, but our troubles were many during the few months we were in the country after the Border Police force had been broken up. We might, however, have fared much worse than we did, with a half-caste woman as our head servant, and two native boys under her. This half-caste, Bessie, was a real interest to me, as she upset my theories so completely. Her father was a white man, and her mother, whom I often saw, a regular "rooi" Zulu. The latter was a sharp-featured, pleasant-looking woman, who wore her hair in correct Zulu style, drawn up straight above her head, and hardened with red earth into a cone, and her costume consisted of the little native petticoat and a blanket. Yet Bessie was in appearance a native of southern India. Her plump rounded figure, smiling, dark, but not very dark, face, brown eastern eyes, and silky, wavy hair, were all exactly like those of a well-to-do ayah. The shape of her face, too, and her manner

carried out the likeness. The Zulu is not negroic in feature, and his skin is not black, but one of the varying shades of bronze, and Bessie was no more like a Zulu than she was like an English girl. As I have said, she interested me greatly, but in the end I had to give her up as a freak. Anyway she was quite pretty, and had charming manners, and was very unhappy when we came away, begging us to take her with us, so I feel kindly towards her, and forget her occasional failings in thinking of her pleasant face and way.

The epistolary efforts of the educated natives are somewhat on a par with those of the babu in India. The following strange request was sent to a lady long resident in the country:—

“MY DEAR MADAM—Please send me medicine for two sore legs and a stick of the heart for Mary Jane.

Your faithful Servant.

KILINA UN'ZWAN.”

The business methods seem keen but involved, in two letters that have fallen into my hands. They were addressed to a farmer and are written from

“P. O. Oxton,  
Ox Kraal,  
Whittlesea.

“L.—M. . . . Esq.—May it please your highness. We are humbly begging you to let you know as had said shall come again with load of poles. What delayed us in the poles makers, who do not yet made them so quickly asforesaid. By writing this note to you, is to say don't wonder with our disappearance and discourageless, thinking that we are no more coming again. We always



eagerly to come soon as get poles. Please, Sir, answer our declaration whether still keeping our fore arrangement ?

We beg to remain, Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

JOHN S. & A. G. MCITEKA.

Understated above full address at beginning."

The head of the firm was evidently not easily discouraged, for another letter followed shortly :—

"SQUIRE L— M. . . .—Right honourable Sir, I beg to state that your favour to hand dated 4th inst. I mostly thankful your trouble to answer mine. Though very sorry to learn that had bought poles from another man. But I am not despairing our business, as fore-wished, I shall bring the load to you any future time can get chance for them. Any talking we shall make on your presence when bring load with in poles wagon. So, Sir, always wait to see me with poles, my wish is to get sheep by bartering from you.

I remain Sir,

- Yrs obedient and faithfully servant,

JOHN S. MCITEKA.

Understated above address."

The native chiefs, used to organisation and command, are shrewd and clear-sighted, and one of our magistrates told my sister how he was once worsted in an interview. In obedience to orders from Government, he was explaining to a chief, after Mr. Gladstone's retrocession of the Transvaal, that it was not because the Boers had beaten us at Majuba that the country was given back to them, but because our magnanimous Government thought it *right*. The chief replied : "Then why does not the British Government give it back to us? It was ours first." An unanswerable argument that left the poor magistrate

speechless. Why cannot we be honest in our dealings both with Boer and native, and say out that the white man must be supreme, and, among whites, we, the British, must rule, as long as we have the strength and pluck to do so? When we can no longer do this, and God rejects us as unfit to hold a first place, I can only hope that I shall be dead and not know our shame.

At Vryheid I experienced one of the great hailstorms that even in South Africa are not encountered often. My sister and her husband were away at the time, Tim being on detachment duty, so that I was alone. I was decidedly alarmed one afternoon by hearing a continuous roaring in the distance. At first I thought it was thunder, but even in Natal there are pauses in the rolling of thunder, and though as I listened the sound seemed to rise and fall, there was not one second's cessation. Looking out I saw a grey cloud, dark as a pall sweeping along to the south, and every moment the roar grew louder and more alarming. As I stood watching, the storm swept round and came straight upon Vryheid, and now the din was appalling. Great jagged pieces of ice came crashing down on the iron roofs, and at least in one case went clean through, and the smashing of glass in all directions added to the turmoil. I fled to my favourite refuge in a storm—bed—and hid my head under a pillow, but in a few seconds six panes of the window close to me were broken, and the storm was actually in the room. In desperation I rose and hurried to the other side of the house in search of shelter. During my flight I was struck by the curious white light that shone through all the windows. There was a continual flashing white light that scarcely seemed as if it could be lightning, but this I cannot say, as it may or may not have thundered, for the roar of the hail drowned all possibility of distinguishing peals of thunder.

When the storm had passed, Vryheid looked as if it had been bombarded; indeed, during months of semi-siege the Boers had done nothing like the damage. Beside windows that were smashed everywhere on the side that the storm had driven, the fruit trees were stripped, and every possible thing that huge hailstones could destroy was in fragments. At the Border Police camp, the horses that were run on the hill slopes were being rounded up and brought in for the night when the storm was heard in the distance. Luckily there was just time to get them under shelter before the hail came. It would have been a terrible business if they had been caught in the open, for horses, terrified by hail, will rush down wind for miles, and animals have even been killed by the hailstones in one of these great storms. That is the only one I have experienced, and I never wish to see another. As my sister and her husband were to camp out the night of the storm, I was very anxious about them, till they rode in serenely the following morning. They had never even heard the storm though they had camped only twelve miles from Vryheid. The tearing wind must have carried the roar in an opposite direction, for Tim told me he had heard one of these storms when thirty miles from it.

During my sister's absence my little household had given me some trouble, though fortunately I had a soldier who had formerly been Tim's orderly and who was an excellent specimen of the English small farmer class. Wise had come out during the war with the first body of Yeomanry, and after an attack of enteric Maggie had him up to our house, so that he might be well cared for while he was getting up his strength. When I was alone, Wise quietly took charge of the kitchen, as the orderly who had succeeded him and who did most of our cooking was out on detachment with his master, and he had no opinion of

the skill of the Zulu, August, who had been left with me as cook. August, who was a Christian Swazi, was so strange in his manner that I suspected he took dacca, but as it turned out afterwards he was really going insane. One day Wise came to me and said in a deprecating way: "Oh, Ma'am, I don't know what the Captain will say. I have knocked August down!" He appeared quite relieved when I looked, as I felt, amused, and added: "He was that aggravating I could not help it, so I gave him one and sent him flying." I was divided between laughter and real admiration for Wise's pluck. Though he was as tall as August, he was so slight and delicate after his illness, that the great hulking Swazi, who was a villainous-looking person, could have murdered him easily. Probably August shared my admiration for the trooper's pluck and simple confidence in white supremacy, for to my great relief he attempted no retaliation. I was never sure, though, that he would not revenge himself, and was thankful when Tim returned and dismissed him, before he went quite off his head.

To return, however, to the subject of storms. It was near Vryheid that I experienced the worst dust storm I have ever been out in. Tim and I had ridden out to a farm about five miles distant, and we were returning in bright, cloudless weather, when we saw a dense red cloud flow down over the lip of the South Lancashire Hill that lay on our right, and come towards us. In a moment a rushing wind blew in our teeth and we were enveloped in red darkness. Tim asked me if I would stop, but I thought the best thing was to get through the storm as quickly as possible. So we flew along against the wind and dust, and trusted to the horses keeping to the track, for we could see nothing. Happily we did not meet anything in our flight, and emerged into the calm, sunny



smiling country, while the red cloud swept on its way in our rear. By the time we were out of the storm, we both looked as if we had been dragged through a hedge, and I never wish to have another such wild tam-o-shanter sort of ride.

A great change was brought about in the horses of South Africa by the war. In our earlier visits to Natal, country-breds had been the ordinary horses. Basuto ponies were common, and regiments that came from India occasionally brought Arabs and Walers, while the remounts for cavalry regiments were, if I remember rightly, Argentines. At the time of our stay at Vryheid the troopers of the Natal Border Police had a strange assortment of horses—Walers, country-breds, English and Russian among them. My brother-in-law's favourite mare was Kafir-bred, and she was a wonderful little animal who, though under 15 hands, could carry him all day without tiring. She also won several races, as her pace was as good as her powers of endurance. Our other horses were all Walers, and my usual mount was a piebald, standing 14'2, that was a determined woman-hater. This characteristic he had when he came to us, and no kindness could make him tolerant of a woman. Piebald had begun life as a cow-pony, and if any woman went up to pat him, he would snap at the caressing hand in a moment, and I always had to be on my guard with him. The Russian horses, of which there were many on the farms about Vryheid, all seemed to have the same amiable, sluggish dispositions, and were all slow. These characteristics caused much amusement to the on-lookers at some of the camp sports where there was a tug-of-war between teams of mounted men. Each team rode horses of a different nationality, and the Russians had no objection to being pulled in any direction. They

made no resistance whatever, but meekly went over like so many sheep. Nothing their indignant riders could do would put any spirit of holding their own into them. A pair of cream Russians were often sent into the town from a neighbouring farmhouse in the sole charge of a small umfaan. The animals allowed the boy to drive to any shops or houses at which he had commissions, stood quietly while these were being done, and took their way home over the rough track without injury to cart or driver. The Russians were very hardy creatures and were never sick or sorry, though the one I knew best died from horse sickness. But that is a scourge from which no horse is secure in that country. A friend of mine, writing on this subject from her home in South Africa, says quaintly: "We do not trouble about our horses except during the horse sick season, when we include them in our prayers, and never let them out in the dew morning or evening."

Four times a year the outlying Boers gathered in Vryheid for nachmaal (Communion), filling the Square with their outspanned waggons and overflowing into the open spaces round. What a time they had, bargaining at the stores, buying and selling, talking and attending their services all day long. Very picturesque the Square used to look, and the young girls, though not exactly pretty, were very fresh and pleasant-looking in their best clothes and clear starched kapjes, for these big sun bonnets soften the faces with a becoming shade. The men occasionally scowled at us when we passed, and almost all looked at us with curiosity, for English people were rare sights to them. After the nachmaal we avoided the Square for some time, as in spite of efforts of magistrate and police, it was not a savoury place.

One day I saw a real up-country Dutch wedding, and it

gave me a new view of the Boer temperament. When I passed through the Square the ceremony was just over, and the large party was coming out of the Dutch church. I was so interested that I stayed to watch the remaining part of the show. The bride, dressed in white, and the bridegroom took their seats in their spider, the immediate female relations (I presumed) getting into three or four more of the same vehicles. As soon as they were all seated the men, of whom there were about fifty, rushed at their horses, held close at hand by Kafirs, flung themselves into the saddle, and formed a guard of honour in front and behind the carriages. Off they all went at full gallop three times round the Square, the women smiling and fluttering in the spiders and the men waving their rifles in the air and shouting. As the latter were dressed almost as finely as the women they made a brave show, and I was struck dumb with astonishment at such an exhibition on the part of the stolid Boers. My sympathies, though, were with the horses as they galloped wildly round, for they had a long journey home before them.

Many incidents that had taken place during the Boer War in different parts of the country used to drift to our ears at Vryheid. Some of the Boers had such a "shrik" at Pieter's Hill that they never stopped their flight till they reached the Vryheid district. It was the *vost-gangers* (infantry) that had scared them, they said. You shot them down and they dropped, but were up again the next minute and advancing. "Allamaghtag man!" as one Boer exclaimed, "The knives on their rifles!" The primitive, old-fashioned Boers had been deceived by our soldiers dropping to fire and then rising to advance, and thought there was something supernatural about it!

The story reminds me of a thought that is often in my mind, that we English people are too apt to forget the

hard work and heroism of the rank and file of our armies. A friend who went through the Boer War with one of the forces of Irregular Horse, had exceptional opportunities of comparing the value of the different branches of our men with the Boers. On this point he says: "The Boers have not and never will have the moral stamina and fidelity of the British soldier, the pride in his regiment and loyalty to his officers that enables him to turn up smiling after a bad reverse. There are many brave men among the Boers, but as they have been bred for generations to resent all authority they lack discipline and are almost impossible to control in action. Active service, when brigaded with regular troops, has made better men of the British South African Colonists, and when serving with Tommy Atkins they have learned to respect his pluck and endurance and above all his perfect discipline, that broke the Boers' hearts as nothing else did. The Irregular Horse were useful in scouting, night marches, and surprises, particularly towards the close of the war, though in my opinion good mounted infantry were fully their equals, and it was undoubtedly the infantry who broke the back of the war. As to our home force, the Territorial Movement is a good one, but I trust the nation is not going to put its faith in that alone. A 'Nation in Arms' sounds well on paper, but will prove a broken reed in case of European warfare if our army is not up to strength. The territorials will need the regulars to stiffen the lines and enable them to re-form after their first rough handling." The warning seems to me not un-needed.

To return, however, to the Boers. That these stolid Dutchmen are by no means insensible to blarney the experience of a friend of ours proved. This officer had managed to get hold of a Cape cart and horses for his baggage, and when he was taken prisoner his goods went



with him. A day or two later he returned to our lines serenely, together with his cart, horses, and baggage. As he had only just come out from home and knew no Dutch this was the more extraordinary, but he had the most wheedling tongue and manner possible, and all I ever heard of his escape was that he and his captors had a very pleasant, indeed highly convivial, evening, in which his comic songs played an important part, and early in the dawn he vanished, not only seen but cheered off by his admiring friends.

The "Doppers" were not behind their more educated brethren in "slimness," as many stories showed. An English officer who was sent out with a white flag to one of the local leaders had much to say on this point. It was known that the Boer General had had much trouble for some time past in keeping his men in the field, and the Englishman's business was to induce him to surrender. The Boer, however, showed a brave face, and endeavoured to impress his visitor with the idea that his men were full of fight. With due courtesy he and a few of the best of his men escorted the Englishman a short distance on his return journey. Their way led them past a farmhouse belonging to a worthy who never missed an opportunity of returning home, when he thought there were no British scouts about. He happened to be at home just then, and seeing the British officer's helmet and taking the rest of the party to be Irregular Horse, he cruelly gave away the show, by standing in his doorway with his hands well over his head and yelling in a strident voice, "I hands op. Don't shoot. Don't shoot. I hands op!" The Englishman, turning to the Boer General, quietly asked him if this was one of his brave and determined burghers.

Another Boer leader was captured in rather an absurd way. An English scout, doing a little examination of an

apparently deserted farmhouse one night—doubtless in the interests of his country and not with any private ideas of loot—heard the sound of a horse being ridden cautiously up. An unshod horse! So the wily trooper hid himself behind a projection inside the back entrance, and as the horseman came softly in a rifle covered him, and a cry of “Hands up” came from the darkness. The trooper was rewarded for his scouting instincts by returning in triumph to his regiment with a Boer General in his train.

A story that I was told of another trooper was the cause of considerable astonishment to the Boers. A patrol of our men had to retire before a number of advancing Boers, as there was danger of the English being cut off. The Boers had not seen them, and, when the order to retire was given, a trooper known as “Nigger” lingered to take a look at the unconscious enemy, straggling along at the foot of the kopje where our men had been sheltering. As Nigger looked down, two Boers, one a huge man, the other small, were passing just beneath him, and in a fit of sheer devilry he determined to make a dash for them. Recklessly spurring his horse Nigger tried to draw his sword, but this was hopelessly jammed, as his horse had rolled with the saddle on. He was now close to the Boers and unarmed, but nothing daunted he rode at the big man, caught him round the neck, and they both rolled down together in a smother of dust. Nigger managed to wriggle uppermost and got both hands on the Boer’s throat. In the meantime the little Boer, who lost his head in the sudden onslaught, was skipping round the men on the ground and calling to the Kafir after-rider to come to the rescue. Before the trooper had either killed or conquered his man he saw the Kafir jump off his horse with a knob-kerrie in his hand and felt a heavy blow on the back of his head. He remembered no more till he

found himself tied like baggage to the back of a Cape cart in a Dutch laager. As a prisoner he was not badly treated, and the Boers used to come and look with much interest at the man who had throttled "Lang Piet." His captors decided that he was mad.

General Louis Botha belonged to the Vryheid district, and though he never returned to live there after the change of ownership of the country, he came sometimes to visit his relations. One day when my sister and her husband were calling on a Boer family the General happened to be there. There were other callers, and when they had left my sister was asked to stay and see the General. When he came in and was introduced, Tim said with his pleasantest smile, "General Botha, meeting you is a pleasure I have long wished for." He was perfectly unconscious, until Maggie pointed it out afterwards, of the irony of his words. Many a weary day, week, and month had Tim and his men spent in chasing the General in hope of "the pleasure of meeting him." Did this side of his words strike the polished, well-bred man whose face bore a smile of responsive pleasure as he listened? Who can say? Louis Botha is no rustic Boer, with his thoughts to be read like an open book.

After the Natal Border Police force had been broken up my brother-in-law went into the Orange River Colony, and my sister and I prepared to leave South Africa, intending to return when Tim should have a settled billet. All the English at Vryheid kindly turned out to see us start, and we left for England with General Sir John Dartnell at the end of January, 1904. We shall never forget the kindness we met with in that far-off country, and we left it with real and lasting regret.



JERRY.

*To face p. 354.*





## APPENDIX I

### HISTORY OF THE NONGAI OR ZULULAND NATIVE POLICE.

IN 1883, the Governor of Natal and Zululand, Sir Henry Bulwer, decided to raise a native force in Zululand for service in that country, and he offered me the appointment as commandant of that force.

I accepted this offer, so resigned my commission as inspector in the Natal Mounted Police, and proceeded to raise and equip the force of natives for Zululand.

This force was to consist of two white officers and fifty natives, non-commissioned officers and men. It was decided that the force should consist of twenty-five natives of Natal and twenty-five of Zululand. The other officer appointed besides myself being Mr. R. H. Addison.

The twenty-five natives were soon procured in Natal, and with this force we proceeded to Zululand, where Mr. Osborn, afterwards Sir Melmoth Osborn, was resident commissioner. At first it was impossible to obtain recruits in Zululand, and as civil war was raging between Cetywayo, who had lately returned from St. Helena, and Sibepu, a force was badly needed at the seat of Government at Eshowe.

At last the required number of men were obtained as recruits, and the drilling, etc., of the men was rapidly proceeded with.

The Zulus are born soldiers, and took to soldiering as naturally as a duck takes to water. The only trouble was with the Natal natives, who were soon mostly got rid of and replaced by Zulus. I must add, however, that the few Natal natives that were retained turned out very well,

and mostly became N.C. Officers, and rendered valuable service. For some reason the Zulu women took a violent dislike to this force, and would have nothing to do with the members of it; consequently recruits were difficult to obtain.

This state of affairs lasted for some time, and it was only after the first fight the Nongai had, when the men showed how they could fight, that the women changed their minds and the Nongai become popular with them, and from this time recruits became eager to join.

The fight in question was when Dabulamanzi and the Usutu impi attacked Mr. Osborn's camp at night near the Nkandla.

On this occasion the Usutu impi came to attack the camp on a bright moonlight night, and as soon as they came in sight most of our native contingent bolted, leaving Mr. Osborn with four white men and fifty-six of the Nongai to defend the camp.

One chief, Tyingwayo, with his men did not bolt, but stood their ground, but did not take any part in the fight that followed.

When the men of the contingent bolted, the boys who were carrying their mats, blankets, etc., rushed screaming with fear into our camp, and as there were about five hundred of them, they simply mobbed the fifty-six Nongai that were in camp, and who were rendered powerless, though the position was a strong one.

There was only one thing to be done, so I decided to march out with the Nongai and meet the Usutus in the open, trusting to the discipline and superior armament of the Nongai. The Usutus were coming on with the greatest confidence, and we met them fair and square in the open. The Nongai behaved perfectly, and did not show the least nervousness or want of confidence. I let the Usutus get within about one hundred and twenty yards, when I gave the order to fire a volley, which was perfectly done, followed by the word "Independent firing." The effect was tremendous. The Usutus gave a

yell and tried their best to get to close quarters, but the effect of the fire was most telling, and in a short time the enemy bolted, after losing nearly one hundred men killed, besides those that got away wounded. The fire of the Nongai was most rapid, for in addition to the sixty rounds the men were carrying in their pouches, I had had ninety rounds shaken loose and put into the haversack of each man.

A few days before this Dabulamanzi had sent in to say that the Nongai were only a lot of boys, and that his men would make short work of them. The Usutus entirely changed their minds after this fight, and always treated the Nongai with the greatest respect.

The force of the attacking Usutus numbered about three thousand, and we had nearly the same force, but they almost all bolted. The force that the fifty-six Nongai and four white men met in the open was commanded by Dabulamanzi in person, and numbered about twelve hundred, and had a lot of Martini-Henry rifles among them.

The Nongai only lost one man killed and three or four wounded, thus showing in a remarkable manner the effect of discipline and the power of the breech-loader over brave but undisciplined men.

Many of the native contingent fled into Natal, and spread the report that Mr. Melmoth Osborn and myself had been killed and the force destroyed, and owing to this report both Mr. Osborn and myself were reported as killed in the English "Times" newspaper.

The next time the Nongai were actively engaged was in 1888, when Dinizulu revolted. The first engagement in these troubles took place at the Nkandla Bush, when the Nongai, about one hundred and fifty strong, were sent in to arrest Dinizulu, who had taken up a position in the Nkandla with about three thousand men. The Nongai were supported by two troops of the Inniskilling Dragoons, under Captain Pennefather, and a troop of mounted infantry.



After some severe fighting this force had to retire, and they were closely followed by Dinizulu's force as far as the Black Umfolosi River. During the fighting on this occasion, the advanced guard, consisting of eighteen mounted men of the Nongai, with two officers, myself included, were charged by the Falazi Regiment, "Dinizulu's Own."

This regiment consisted of young men, armed mostly with assegais, and were about five hundred strong. These men came straight at us, but were received with a withering fire, which only stopped them when they got within about twenty yards of us. I had a bandolier with fifty cartridges, and I had only four left when the rush was stopped. We had six horses shot, my own included, but strange to say no men hit. Some time afterwards I met Dinizulu and asked him how many men his regiment, the "Falazi," had lost. He laughed and would not tell me at first, but subsequently, after a consultation with his head men, he told me that the "Falazi" had lost forty men killed, and the wounded were so many that they could not count them.

The next big fight in which the Nongai were engaged, about three weeks after Nkandla, was at Hlopekulu, in which fight the Nongai covered themselves with glory. Cetywayo's brother, "Ishingana," the best fighting man of the royal family, was reported to be at Hlopekulu with a large impi, and the English force at Nkongemi were ordered to go and look him up, but express orders were given that the regular forces were not to be used, but simply kept in reserve.

The 6th Inniskillings and mounted infantry were sent in support of two officers and one hundred and three of the Nongai, two hundred and fifty mounted Basutos, Hlubi's men, under Major McKean, and about two thousand native contingent. This force arrived at Hlopekulu about eleven a.m., and it was soon found that the place was strongly occupied.

The two thousand native contingent were sent around

the left to work up the White Umfulozi, and turn the right of the position. Major McKean, with the mounted Basutos, was sent to the right to turn the left of the Zulu position. The Nongai, under myself, were sent straight at the position. The Basutos hung back, and would not leave their horses and advance into the broken ground, but the Nongai rushed straight for a strong body of Zulus who were occupying a rocky eminence, and which was found to be strongly fortified by a stone wall and a round stone fort. This was afterwards found to be the key of the position, and the Zulus fought most desperately to maintain it.

They held on to it until the Nongai were fairly among them; afterwards it was found that twenty-six of their men were bayonnetted within the small stone fort.

I led this attack in person, and was the first man over the stone wall into the position. My horse was a fine jumper, and I put him at the wall as hard as he could go. He jumped right in among the Zulus, and the Nongai came over the wall pell-mell after me.

The Nongai rushed down into the bush mingled with the retreating Zulus, and entered pell-mell with them into their main fortifications, which were very strong, but the entrance of which had been left open. Some desperate hand-to-hand fighting took place here, but the Zulus were thoroughly beaten, and took refuge in caves and other places.

In the meantime our two thousand native contingent had met another party of the Zulus, and got thoroughly beaten and chased from the field, losing over seventy killed. This fight took place in the bed of the White Umfulozi River, which is here very shallow and broad, and runs over white sand.

I saw the whole of this fight at a distance of about one thousand yards. It was a most curious sight; the two forces met in the middle of the stream, and for some time one could see nothing on account of the spray that was raised. I had my field-glasses, however, and in a very

short time I saw that our contingent was getting the worst of it, and in a few moments they were bolting down stream followed by the Zulus, who chased them clean away, and then came our way to assist their comrades, not knowing that the Nongai were in full possession of their fortifications, and that the rest of the Zulu impi had been thoroughly beaten. When the two forces met there was some more desperate fighting, but nothing could withstand the Nongai, who were armed with Martinis and still had plenty of ammunition.

The Zulus fought very pluckily, but did not come on in a body as they should have done, thus making use of their numbers, but came on in small parties, and were thus taken in detail. There was some desperate fighting over the cattle, about two thousand, which were enclosed in some ditches, which had been dug around them. The whole of the cattle were taken, and an officer afterwards counted ninety-two dead Zulus, who were killed trying to defend the cattle, which were captured by the Nongai.

Later on, when the Nongai were got together again, it was found that only three of the men were actually killed, but a good many had been wounded. I calculated that fully from four hundred and fifty to five hundred Zulus had been killed by the Nongai.

Our native contingent lost between seventy and eighty killed, besides wounded, so it will be seen that the fighting was pretty severe. One white man, a leader in the native contingent, lost his life, and an officer of the mounted infantry, Lieutenant Brescoe, was killed, being shot while passing some bush.

When I managed to get the Nongai together again they had not a single round of ammunition left, and many of their bayonets were bent and twisted corkscrews, and had to be thrown away. These bayonets were of German manufacture.

Many of the military officers who were present with the troops, and had been in India, said that they did not think



that the very best of the Indian troops would have the ghost of a chance with the Nongai, and the others agreed that the Nongai were fully equal to the Indians in every way. The Government made a grant of £2 per head to the N.C. officers and men of the Nongai in reward of their conspicuous bravery shown on this occasion.

Afterwards the Nongai were engaged in several minor engagements, in all of which they did well.

During the Boer War the Nongai were increased to six European officers and six hundred N.C. officers and men. They were employed in Zululand, and were several times engaged with the Boers, and always acquitted themselves creditably, the men not showing the slightest fear of the Boers.

They assisted in beating off an attack on a convoy, proceeding from Melmoth to Nkandla, and on another occasion, when one sergeant and nineteen men were accompanying another convoy to Nkandla, the convoy was attacked by a large force of Boers and captured; the Nongai lost ten men killed in this affair.

The remaining ten men took refuge in some old gold workings of the Times Company that were near, and kept the Boers at bay. These ten men afterwards marched back to Melmoth with bayonets fixed, and I am told, being absent at the time, that they did not show the slightest demoralisation, but at once went back to the scene of the catastrophe with the rescue party.

A party of the Nongai, consisting of one sergeant and twenty privates, was with Colonel Chapman, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, at Itala, when the Boers attacked that place. Colonel Chapman informed me afterwards that these men behaved with the greatest gallantry during the attack. They were on outlying picket when the Boers attacked, and could easily have got away, but they fought their way back through the Boers in the most plucky manner, and joined the soldiers defending the place.

During the latter part of the war I was sent down to Pietermaritzburg to take command of the Natal Police,



and handed over the command of the Nongai to Inspector Fairlie, who proved to be the right man in the right place, and kept the Nongai up to the highest state of efficiency.

At the end of the war the question began to be mooted in the Natal Parliament as to the danger of arming the natives. In the end it was decided to disband the Nongai, which was done, much to the disgust of the whole force.

When the rebellion of 1906 began I was requested to raise the Nongai again, and sent Inspector Fairlie up to endeavour to do so, but the men were so sore at the treatment they had received that they refused to enlist again. I then went up to Eshowe myself, and using all my personal influence, I got about one hundred and fifty men to enlist. These men were put under Inspector Fairlie and Sub-Inspector Lindsay, and did most valuable service during the rebellion. At Bobe Ridge they were the first to meet and check the desperate rush of about six hundred Zulus, led by Bambata, giving me time to get up with the Natal Police and Volunteers. Again, at the Mome Gorge, they did splendid service, and were largely instrumental in the success of that day.

All the Europeans present on these occasions, the Volunteers included, were loud in their praises of the Nongai.

After the rebellion was crushed the Natal Government again decided to disband the Nongai, which was done. Further comment is needless.

GEORGE MANSEL, COLONEL,  
*Late Chief Commissioner Natal Police.*

*October 6, 1909.*

## APPENDIX II

### AN ACCOUNT OF THE NATIVE REBELLION IN NATAL AND THE PART TAKEN IN IT BY THE NATAL POLICE IN 1906.

EARLY in 1906 the natives in Natal were showing unmistakable signs of unrest and insubordination. Early in the year the Natal Police were sent to Mapamulu to give confidence to the white people in that district.

While the main body of the Police were there, news was received that Sub-Inspector Hunt and trooper Armstrong had been murdered, while trying to make some arrests, by the natives near Richmond. The camp was struck at once at Mapamulu, and the Police proceeded with all haste to the scene of the outrage.

This force was stopped at Richmond Road, where it joined a force of Volunteers under Col. McKenzie, and proceeded to the scene of the murders under that officer's command. Two of the men present at the murders were captured, tried by court-martial and shot, and two others that had been wounded in the affray were taken prisoners, and were afterwards tried by the civil power and hanged. Of the small remaining portion of the tribe which had murdered Sub-Inspector Hunt and trooper Armstrong, twelve were afterwards captured, condemned by court-martial, and shot at Richmond, and the chief, Majonga, and a few men were captured or killed in an encounter in the Richmond bush soon afterwards.

Of these Majonga and the others captured were afterwards tried by the civil power and hanged.

The column under Col. McKenzie kept moving about

the country for some time, visiting tribes suspected of disloyalty, etc., and were then disbanded.

Soon afterwards, however, further signs of disloyalty began to show themselves, especially with a small tribe near Greytown, Bambata's, and the Natal Police under Col. Mansel were ordered up to the Umvoti County, as the magistrate, Mr. Cross, and party had been fired at and pursued, while proceeding to Keat's Drift to hold a branch court.

While encamped near Greytown at Burraps, Col. Mansel received a telegram stating that a small party of Natal Police, and some white people, including women and children were in laager at Keat's Drift, and that Bambata and his tribe were assembled in the thorn country, at the river Impanza, and were lying in wait to intercept the party at the laager at Keat's Drift, in case of them trying to get through to Greytown.

The Natal Police, one hundred and twenty strong, at once proceeded to Keat's Drift, and brought the women and children away, the men remaining in the laager.

It was late in the evening before this party could get under weigh in returning to Greytown, and, on the way, at a turning in the road near Impanza, and densely wooded, the Police were suddenly attacked by Bambata in the most desperate manner.

The natives jumped from the bush on the higher side of the road right in amongst the advanced guard.

Every precaution had been taken, but it was impossible to send out flankers, as the bush was very dense on each side of the road, and it was dark. A desperate encounter then ensued. The Police, though taken at every disadvantage, made a desperate resistance. Part of the advance guard forced their way through, and the remainder fought their way back to the main body, which hearing the yells of the natives and the firing in front, made its way with all haste to the scene of the conflict.

Bambata and his men got into the bush, quite close all round the Police who were on the road, and sent showers

of assegais and fired heavily as well. This continued for some time, the Police firing into the bush on each side of the road, when Bambata had had enough of it and retired. It was impossible to follow him up, as the bush was most dense and the night dark.

The Police had four men killed, several wounded, and lost a good many horses killed and wounded.

Inspector Dimmick and Sergeants Folker and Guest behaved with the greatest gallantry, bringing in wounded men on their horses. Under the circumstances no more gallant actions have ever been recorded. Colonel Mansel recommended these three men for the Victoria Cross, but being Police and not Volunteers they did not get it.

The ladies behaved splendidly on this trying occasion, not showing the least fear, and attending most assiduously to the wounded.

Bambata and his men crossed soon afterwards into Zululand, and took up their quarters in the Nkandla Forest, where they were soon joined by Methla-ka-Zulu and his following, and by all the desperate characters in Zululand and Natal.

The Police followed up at once, and crossing the Tugela at Middle Drift managed to keep Bambata and his gang in the forest, thus giving the converging columns from Natal time to get up before Bambata could raise Cain in Zululand.

Before Bambata was killed and his following dispersed, several encounters took place with the different columns that were after him.

In one of these a column under command of Colonel Mansel, consisting of the Natal Police, Durban Light Infantry, the Naval Brigade, and the Victoria Mounted Rifles, was vigorously attacked by Bambata, whose men, about four hundred strong, jumped up from behind a grassy slope and charged the column right in the open.

The natives came on with the greatest resolution, holding their shields over their heads with their left hands and



their assegais in their right. They came on at a run, without uttering a sound, straight for the column.

The skirmishers in front had to retire, and the Zulus were first stopped by the Nongai—the Zululand Police—who received them with a withering fire, which gave the remainder of the column time to dismount and open fire. It was afterwards found that Bambata had been using charms, and had got the Zulus to believe that he had turned our bullets into water, and that they would not hurt them. It was this belief that made them come on as they did.

The Zulus were not stopped until they were within a few yards of the column. In fact, some of the men were wounded by assegais, while the Nongai bayonnetted some of the Zulus. The Zulus lost about one hundred and twenty men killed, whilst the column only lost a few men wounded. This action was called the Bopa Bridge affair.

The next affair in which the Natal Police were engaged was the Mome Gorge, in which action both Bambata and Methla-ka-Zulu were killed, and the Zulus lost about six hundred men killed, thus practically ending the rebellion.

The Nongai—Zululand Native Police—again distinguished themselves in this action, getting right in among the Zulus and using their bayonets with terrible effect.

G. MANSEL,

*Late Chief Commissioner Natal Police.*

FALMOUTH,

*July 28, 1909.*

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